



# ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

Newsletter of the Federal Depository Library Program

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## Depository Library Council Recommendations to the United States Public Printer

Fall Meeting, October 16-18, 1995  
Memphis, Tennessee

### 1. RECOMMENDATION: Transition to Electronic Formats

Council recommends that the transition plan prepared by the Government Printing Office for the transition from a paper/fiche based environment to an electronic environment balance the needs of users with the potential economic benefit of such conversion. Council is willing to work with GPO in the preparation of a plan.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION: Appropriate Media

Council believes that it is implicit in the public's right of access to government information that dissemination must be in media appropriate to the information's content, use, and audience. Council recommends that the Public Printer clearly state in the congressionally mandated "Study to Identify Measures Necessary For a Successful Transition to a More Electronic Federal Depository Library Program" that certain information must be made available to the public in paper at Federal Government expense for the foreseeable future.

**Rationale:** While Council recognizes the current climate in which the conversion of government information to electronic format is seen as highly desirable, Council also believes that some information is more efficient, useful, and cost effective in paper format. Council is very concerned that the rush to reduce the cost of government information is overshadowing the need for thoughtful determination of information formats, formats which are appropriate to the user and the information type and content.

Council believes it is important that the GPO Study Executive Working Group be made aware of the depository library community's commitment to paper as a lasting and important medium for the congressional constituents within their districts.

Having expressed our commitment to paper as an important continuing medium for information, Council is also supportive of the efficiencies and cost effectiveness of electronic information. We appreciate the opportunity to influence the recent Superintendent of Documents draft policy statement on "Electronic Information Access

and Dissemination in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP)" and support the concepts expressed therein. But Council is deeply concerned that the user perspective, the intended audience of the publication, and other equally important factors may not be adequately considered if the draft statement is the sole articulation of policy. Thus Council recommends that a transition plan be developed, and Council stands ready to assist the Superintendent of Documents in developing such a plan. Council's Ad hoc Committee on Format Transition has volunteered to assist with this planning.

### **3. RECOMMENDATION: Technology Assessment Study**

Council recommends that the Public Printer continue to explore with the Joint Committee on Printing the possibility of conducting a technology assessment study by a federally funded research group within the context of the congressional study and strategic planning process currently underway.

**Rationale:** Council shares the disappointment of the depository library community with the denial by the Joint Committee on Printing of GPO's request for a study by a federally funded research group to examine the technology necessary to implement an electronic dissemination program. Council believes that the data gained in such a study is essential to a thorough and independent evaluation of the technological capabilities of all partners in the program as well as the costs involved in the transition to and implementation of an electronic dissemination program.

### **4. RECOMMENDATION: Support Services**

Council recommends an expanded role for the Government Printing Office in the provision of support services for libraries and end users. These services include but are not limited to: technical support, user support, training, documentation preparation and resource sharing. This expanded role should be reflected in the transition plan.

- **Rationale:** Council recognizes that the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) is operating in an increasingly electronic environment. However, Council is very concerned that there is minimum user support available within depository libraries for the electronic products being distributed through the FDLP.

Council believes that the electronic environment requires a new model for the relationship between GPO, depository libraries, producing agencies and the end user. The new model should be one where GPO is pro-active in providing comprehensive support for products sent through the depository system or coordinating such support through the producing agency.

### **5. RECOMMENDATION: Equipment Grants**

Council recommends that the Public Printer, as part of the Government Printing Office's FY 1997 proposed budget, request funds to assist willing but needy depository libraries in the initial acquisition of computer equipment and in establishing an Internet connection in order to provide public access to government information.



**Rationale:** Council recognizes that some depository libraries cannot offer their library users access to the full range of electronic information resources produced by the Federal Government at the present time because of a lack of hardware or Internet access. Many of these libraries are willing to offer electronic access but need financial help in order to make electronic access for patrons and staff a reality in the near future. Depository libraries should be asked to submit a grant application for such funds.

## **6. RECOMMENDATION: Preservation Issues**

Council recommends that the Public Printer in cooperation with other Federal agencies seek Federal legislation that will ensure the preservation of all electronic public information products from the time of their initial release to the public.

**Rationale:** The Federal Government, including executive, legislative, and judicial branch agencies, the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Government Printing Office, must recognize their cooperative responsibility to preserve and provide long term access to electronic information, and work to enact legislation that ensures the integrity and ongoing public access to electronic government information.

Information printed on permanent paper and distributed to libraries will be available indefinitely with little attention from library staff. The same cannot be said of information delivered in electronic formats. If public information in electronic formats is to be saved for future users, preservation should begin at the time the data is released. And unless a magnetic tape, for instance, is copied or refreshed regularly, the information on the tape may be lost. Furthermore, unless the information is migrated to new forms of media that can be accessed by new forms of software and hardware, the information will be effectively lost.

Currently, few libraries of any type can refresh digital data and migrate it to new forms of software and hardware. Fortunately, the mission of the Center for Electronic Records at the National Archives and Records Administration is to do just this for U.S. government records. However, unless the information is sent to them before it disappears from its electronic formats, or if it is never sent, the information will not be available to the users of tomorrow.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION: Model Agreements**

Council recommends that the Government Printing Office develop model agreements that depository libraries can use when negotiating information dissemination partnerships between Federal agencies and depository libraries. Among the provisions of the agreement should be arrangements for long term access to the government information included in the agreement. GPO should be notified when a depository library enters into an electronic partnership with a Federal agency.

**Rationale:** Partnerships between Federal agencies and depository libraries constitute one by-product of the increasing tendency of agencies to distribute public information in electronic form. One such arrangement is that between the Department of State and the University of Illinois at Chicago Library, whereby the library is facilitating access to the

agency's electronic information. By developing model agreements, GPO will help ensure that libraries and agencies follow minimum standards. Notification will enable GPO to participate in the negotiations where appropriate, and will allow GPO to serve as a central source of information about these electronic partnerships.

#### **8. RECOMMENDATION: Centralized Access**

Council recommends that the Government Printing Office investigate the feasibility of establishing centralized access to CD-ROM products which have been distributed through the Federal Depository Library Program.

**Rationale:** Some of the CD-ROMs distributed through the Federal Depository Library Program are data storage disks; others require large amounts of working space for use while being low use information. Some of the depository libraries do not at this time have trained staff or technological capability to provide onsite access to these electronic publications. Council is interested in having GPO explore a new role of providing "near line access" to certain distributed CD-ROMs, possibly via a jukebox storage facility. Such access could solve some libraries' problems.

#### **9. RECOMMENDATION: Software Standards**

Council recommends that the Government Printing Office take an active role in advocating and promoting open standards related to information processing and access, such as SGML and ANSI Z39.50.

**Rationale:** Council recognizes that information technology is evolving rapidly and that GPO has a significant challenge in anticipating and adapting to these changes to serve the Federal Depository Library Program. Council recommends that GPO focus on the underlying standards, rather than on specific technical approaches. For example, WAIS was a strategic choice for the Federal Depository Library Program because of its use of the open, de jure standard ANSI Z39.50. However, it is not a good strategy to build into the Program a dependence on technical characteristics specific to the products of WAIS Incorporated. Similar cautions hold with respect to Adobe Acrobat and other "published" standards. This strategy will not only help GPO avoid dead-end technology, it will strengthen the use of open standards to the extent that GPO maintains a perceived leadership position.

#### **10. RECOMMENDATION: Revised Guidelines**

Council recommends that the Library Programs Service implement the revised "Guidelines for the Federal Depository Library Program" as adopted by Council (10/17/95). Council further recommends that the Guidelines be reviewed every two years.

#### **11. RECOMMENDATION: Minimum Technical Requirements**

Council recommends that the Government Printing Office implement the technical requirements outlined in the "Guidelines for the Federal Depository Library Program,"



Guideline 7-8, (as revised October 1995). These requirements should be effective October 1, 1996.

**Rationale:** Council believes that a basic requirement for every depository library must be the ability to access local and remote electronic information sources (e.g., CD-ROMs, online systems, world wide web sites, etc.). This capability is already essential in order to adequately service the government information needs of the public and will become increasingly important as the Federal Depository Library Program migrates to a more electronic program. Appropriate hardware and software must be provided to enable public users to access electronic information available through the Federal Depository Library Program. This hardware and software should include computer workstations capable of providing Internet access, reading CD-ROMs, downloading or copying files, and printing. See "Recommended Minimum Technical Guidelines for Federal Depository Libraries."

## **12. RECOMMENDATION: No-Fee Access to GPO Access**

Council recommends that the Government Printing Office make GPO Access available at no charge to the public.

**Rationale:** Council recognizes that under P.L. 103-40, "Government Printing Office Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993," GPO "may charge reasonable fees for use of the directory and the system of access [i.e., GPO Access]... except that use of the directory and the system of access shall be made available to depository libraries without charge." Council, however, is concerned that the present registration process is inhibiting libraries and the public from utilizing the Federal Government information sources available on the GPO Access system.

While Council applauds the effort of GPO and depository libraries and gateway libraries to provide this service at no cost to the public, the disproportionate burden this places on the relatively few existing gateways and registered libraries is troublesome, and overall access to the service is inequitably distributed throughout the depository system. Further, a number of other government-based entities are already providing identical or similar information sources to the public free of charge. Thus GPO Access is perceived less favorably by the public, and the potential for the service to provide government information to the public is limited. Finally, agencies looking for electronic means to disseminate their information to the public may regard the fee structure as a barrier to public access.

Council believes that GPO should investigate this issue to determine whether alternative options exist which would facilitate public access to the GPO Access service.

## **13. RECOMMENDATION: Advance Notice of GPO Access Changes**

Council recommends that the Public Printer provide advance notice to subscribers of GPO Access when new databases are added and when user interfaces are changed.

**Rationale:** Advance notice of new databases and changes in the user interface is desirable for all subscribers to GPO Access. For GPO gateway libraries in particular, advance notice allows the gateway partner to prepare the appropriate access documentation for each new database, and to revise the existing user interface documentation at the time that interface changes are implemented. Through enhanced documentation and user aids, GPO Access gateway libraries provide a useful value-added service. It is in GPO's best interest to promote the effectiveness of gateway libraries by providing adequate notice of changes, as well as other information and support.

#### **14. RECOMMENDATION: User Input into Software Development**

Council recommends that the Government Printing Office involve the depository library community in the development of the user interface for the GPO Access Phase II software. Council recommends substantive involvement of the user community throughout the development of GPO electronic products, including further development of the Monthly Catalog CD-ROM.

**Rationale:** Council recognizes the challenges faced by the Government Printing Office in the development of new access software. However, Council is very concerned that the GPO Access Phase II software and the Monthly Catalog CD-ROM software be useful to both the general public and the library community. To that end, we ask for involvement by members of Council and the depository community throughout the development process. Council recommends that GPO solicit input from the users of these databases through focus groups, at Council meetings, and at conferences.

#### **15. RECOMMENDATION: FAQ's**

Council recommends that the Government Printing Office establish an information resource on GPO Access consisting of a compilation of Frequently Asked Questions.

#### **16. RECOMMENDATION: Monthly Catalog**

Council recommends that the Government Printing Office investigate the inclusion of cataloging records beginning with July 1976 on the Monthly Catalog CD-ROM, and add OCLC record numbers to the new paper edition.

**Rationale:** Because cataloging records for government documents are available in machine-readable format from July of 1976, and because it is intended that only one year of cataloging records be available through the Federal locator, the GPO-produced Monthly Catalog on CD-ROM should include records from July of 1976. This would provide one product for all electronic cataloging records for government documents and would be of greater value to depository libraries.

The new paper edition of the Monthly Catalog should contain the OCLC record number as this is the only link to the specific electronic version of the full cataloging record.



**17. RECOMMENDATION: Identifying World Wide Webs Sites through Cataloging**

Council recommends that the Government Printing Office, in cooperation with the other cataloging agencies, consistently utilize existing mechanisms for including in cataloging records information identifying government publications available at Internet/World Wide Web sites.

**Rationale:** Increasingly, government publications are discontinued in paper and microfiche format and replaced with electronic versions available via the Internet or dial-up bulletin boards and, increasingly, library patrons are asking for electronic versions of government documents. For depository libraries to be able to continue to provide access to these publications, it is imperative that existing mechanisms of site identification (USMARC 856 tag, "Electronic Location and Access") be included in cataloging records so that locations may be readily known.

**18. RECOMMENDATION: Linkages within the MARC Record to Electronic Versions**

Council recommends that the Government Printing Office work with other CONSER libraries to implement a consistent methodology to provide the necessary linking information for titles converted from paper/fiche to electronic format.

**Rationale:** Council is concerned that MARC records for publications formerly issued in paper or microfiche which have been converted to electronic format do not provide adequate linkages between the various formats. Titles discontinued in a print format may be continued in an electronic format on a world wide web site, or on a CD-ROM. Without linking notes in the old record to alert users to the continued dissemination of the information in another format, users may fail to locate it.

Since the MARC record is the basis for describing and locating government information in most libraries, GPO cataloging should clearly supply the information needed to locate titles continued in another format. Linkages should direct users forward to the new electronic edition and backwards to the paper/fiche.

The cataloging of electronic journals is a major topic of discussion among national cataloging standards organizations. Government information is moving more rapidly to electronic formats than are other areas of publishing. The Government Printing Office is already involved in the development of standards through its participation in CONSER. The CONSER editing and cataloging manuals already provide some guidance in providing for links between paper and alternative formats. We urge the GPO to make use of the existing documentation and to continue to take a leadership role in further development of cataloging standards for electronic formats.

**19. RECOMMENDATION: Training for Other Agencies**

Council recommends that the Government Printing Office arrange workshops which will assist agencies to publish government information products and provide services suitable for use by the general public.

**Rationale:** Council recognizes that Federal agencies have an increasing role in the publication of government information. This changing role derives not only from the technology of desktop publishing and the changing economics of print and electronic publishing, but from the socio-political trend toward decentralization. However, few Federal agencies are skilled in the publishing trade and Council is mindful of a strong public need for the rapid development of such skills. As agencies reinvent their relationships to public constituencies, there should be a strong demand for training in the publishing of government information for the general public. GPO should take a leadership role in arranging for such training.

## **20. RECOMMENDATION: STAT-USA Access Commendation and Logon Procedure**

Council requests that the Public Printer express our appreciation to the Department of Commerce and STAT-USA for making free accounts to STAT-USA available to Federal depository libraries. Council also requests that the Public Printer communicate our concern about limiting each depository library to a single free password. The number of passwords available to a library should more properly reflect the high use and diversity of the electronic product once issued to depositories but now only "bundled" through STAT-USA.

**Rationale:** Government information is provided without fee to the public in depository libraries. The Department of Commerce's provision of passwords to STAT-USA is consistent with the no-fee depository library access provided to depository libraries to GPO Access and should serve as an important precedent to be emulated by other agencies. This is particularly important as more agencies search for ways of meeting their public dissemination obligations while reducing the agency's own budget.

However, Council is concerned about the single-password access to STAT-USA. This is based on the fact that there is a wide variety and, more importantly, a large number of information resources available on STAT-USA. Many of these resources were once individually part of the Federal Depository Library Program and a number of them were heavily used in their paper formats. As paper editions of government information resources are discontinued in favor of electronic editions, located at a single site, i.e. STAT-USA, use of STAT-USA may be limited to one single no-fee passworded user work station. This has the effect of limiting access in that once users could access each title at the same time (i.e. multiple users of multiple titles). Access is now limited to one user for all products. This model does not fit the depository environment. If agencies are going to use STAT-USA to fulfill their Federal Depository Library Program requirements, then STAT-USA needs to develop mechanisms which will maintain the intent of the depository distribution-ready and no-fee access to government information.

We encourage the development of mechanisms to provide for broader access to STAT-USA. Broader access should include such options as access through local area networks, multiple passwords for depository libraries and simpler log-on procedures. Librarians in a number of institutions would be willing to work with the STAT-USA staff to improve access at the local level.



**21. RECOMMENDATION: Depository Library Council on the World Wide Web**

Council recommends that the Government Printing Office include the records of the Depository Library Council on the GPO World Wide Web home page.

**22. RECOMMENDATION: Congressional Priority Boxes**

To ensure the timely delivery of high demand items, Council recommends that the practice by the Government Printing Office of providing Congressional priority shipments and "hot item" priority shipments continue.

**23. RECOMMENDATION: DLC Fall Meeting Site**

Council recommends that one of the following be the site of the Fall 1996 Depository Library Council meeting: Cincinnati, Denver/Boulder, Ft. Lauderdale, Milwaukee, or Salt Lake City.

**COMMENDATION: J.R. Baumgardner**

Council congratulates J.R. Baumgardner, Deputy Director of Library Programs Service and a GPO employee since 1978, on the occasion of his retirement, and commends Mr. Baumgardner for his many years of service to the Government Printing Office and the Federal Depository Library Program.

**COMMENDATION: Mark Scully**

Council congratulates Mark Scully, former Director of the Library Programs Service and GPO employee since 1981, on the occasion of his retirement, and commends Mr. Scully for his many years of service to the Government Printing Office and the Federal Depository Library Program.

**COMMENDATION: John Phillips and OSU Library Staff**

Council commends John Phillips and the staff of the Oklahoma State University Library for their work on compiling the archival files of the Depository Library Council and creating an Internet site for electronic access to these files.

**COMMENDATION: Shirley Woodrow**

Council commends Shirley Woodrow, Minority Staff member of the Joint Committee on Printing, for her many years of support for the Federal Depository Library Program and access to government information.

## COUNCIL ACTION ITEMS

- As a participant of the GPO Study Advisory Group, Council will prepare a report as soon as possible on the smooth transition to a more electronic Federal Depository Library Program, based on the input gathered at the fall Council meeting.
  - Council will establish a FDLP Statistics Work Group. This work group will (1) develop output measures for the Federal Depository Library Program, and (2) examine the results of the 1995 Biennial survey to gather information on depository libraries that may fall below the technical requirements recommended for libraries.
  - Council will establish an Ad hoc Committee on Format Transition. This committee will continue and build upon the efforts of the SOD 13 Work Group of Council's GPO Operations Committee. The charge of the Ad hoc Committee on Format Transition will be to work with GPO and the depository library community to assist in identifying issues and planning for the smooth transition from a primarily paper/fiche based environment to a more electronically based program. This includes working with GPO to develop a "core list" of titles which should remain in paper. The SOD 13 Work Group in its present configuration is discontinued.
  - Council will work with GPO and others to plan and present a "new librarian" track at the Spring Conference and Council meeting.
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# **Report of the Depository Library Council to the Executive Working Group of the Study to Identify Measures Necessary for a Successful Transition to a More Electronically Based Federal Depository Library Program**

**November 1995**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

A cooperative study to identify measures necessary for a successful transition to a more electronically based Federal Depository Library Program, as outlined in the conference report (House Report 104-212) to H.R. 1854, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act of 1996, is currently underway, at congressional direction, by the Government Printing Office. The study is to be completed by March 1996 and is to include a strategic plan which will serve as the basis for GPO's FY 1997 budget submission.

Wayne Kelley, Superintendent of Documents, serves as chair of the study. Judy Russell, Director of GPO's Office of Electronic Information Dissemination Service, is chair of the study's executive working group. The Depository Library Council is among the organizations that make up the study's advisory group.

This report of the Depository Library Council to the executive working group is based on input gathered at the fall 1995 meeting of the Depository Library Council, held October 16-18, 1995, in Memphis, TN. More than 150 depository librarians and other members of the depository library community attended this meeting and participated in the discussion sessions on the GPO study.

## **II. PLANNING ISSUES FOR A MORE ELECTRONIC FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARY PROGRAM**

Electronic information technologies present tremendous opportunities for improving public access to government information, as well as potential efficiencies and cost savings which may result from the utilization of these technologies for producing, disseminating, and accessing government information. The Depository Library Council strongly believes that, in planning for the transition to a more electronic Federal Depository Library Program, factors relating to public access and use of the information content must be the primary considerations in any determination of the format of information products and services. Further, the Council believes that the benefits of any potential cost savings cannot be realized and effected without a thorough, system-wide evaluation and technical analysis of the costs and capabilities of producing, disseminating, and servicing electronic government information.



Any examination or revision of U.S.C. Title 44 and related Federal information policies must sustain and enhance public access to government information. Government information products and services should be defined as broadly as possible, and should be made available to the public unless agencies can show that the information is inappropriate for dissemination. A system of geographically dispersed libraries, based on congressional districts which focus services on constituents and which integrate all formats of information, will continue to be essential to best meet the local government information needs of the American public. Public information must be accessible at no fee through these libraries in the format that is most useful to the user as well as most cost effective to the public. And the Federal Government--including executive, legislative, and judicial branch agencies, the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Government Printing Office--must recognize the government's responsibility to preserve and provide ongoing public access to electronic information, and must work to enact legislation that ensures the integrity and long term access of all formats of Federal Government information.

Council believes that the migration to a more electronic Federal Depository Library Program will create new opportunities for the Government Printing Office and depository libraries in servicing the public's government information needs and fulfilling the mission and goals of the program. GPO will need to move beyond its traditional role as printer and distributor of information products, and must integrate itself into all aspects of the life cycle of government information. As the central coordinating agency, GPO is strategically positioned to work with Federal agencies in the development of appropriate and usable information access and delivery systems and applications (e.g., online systems, standardized software, etc.). GPO's cataloging and indexing responsibilities and expertise will become even more critical as formats change and dynamic information sources are developed. Depository librarians and other program partners providing public access to government information will look to GPO increasingly for training, instruction, and support in the use of Federal information products and services. Agencies, libraries, and networks that provide extended or gateway access to government sources will rely heavily upon GPO to coordinate these activities and to communicate new developments in a timely way. And, working with other Federal agencies and program partners, GPO will need to develop comprehensive strategies to ensure long term access to electronic government information.

Depository libraries must continue to prepare for and adapt to the challenges presented by electronic information and its accompanying technologies. Council believes that every depository library must be able to access local and remote electronic information sources (e.g., CD-ROMs, online systems, WWW sites, etc.) in order to adequately service the government information needs of the public. Council also believes, however, that the public's needs will be best served if planning for the transition to increased utilization of electronic technologies takes into account libraries' electronic capabilities, the appropriateness of the information format, and user expectations and behavior, when evaluating the effects on public access. For example, while depository libraries have made significant progress in preparing for electronic dissemination, approximately 60 percent of depository libraries cannot yet provide full (graphical) World Wide Web access for their patrons, and roughly 30 percent of depository libraries presently have only a single Internet workstation for the public to access all government information products and services. Council endorses the development of grants and other support programs to assist libraries in the transition period.



Depository libraries participate in every stage of the government information life cycle, and they must continue to work with GPO and other program partners to extend these roles in the electronic environment. Library and user input will be critical to the creation, development, and evaluation of information products and services. Libraries must work with GPO to develop strategies for identifying and locating information sources in all formats and wherever they may reside. Libraries will continue to act as the principle agents in facilitating and providing public access and use of government information in all formats. Libraries traditionally have helped to guarantee long term access to government publications through their collections, and must cooperatively work to develop mechanisms to ensure long term access to electronic information.

While the mechanisms for the creation, production, and delivery of electronic government information may be increasingly decentralized, the need for a coordinating role to oversee and administer effective public access to this information remains paramount. The role of the Government Printing Office in administering a more electronic FDLP will move increasingly toward one of coordinating the support and services necessary for libraries and the public to access Federal Government information.

### III. SUMMARIES OF THE DISCUSSION SESSIONS FROM THE FALL MEETING OF THE DEPOSITORY LIBRARY COUNCIL, OCTOBER 17, 1995, MEMPHIS, TN

#### ASSUMPTIONS FOR DISCUSSION/PLANNING PURPOSES ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE FEDERAL DEPOSITORY LIBRARY PROGRAM

The following assumptions were used as the basis for discussion during the Council discussion sessions on the GPO study and strategic planning process. These assumptions have emerged in the context of the congressional Study to Identify Measures for a Successful Transition to a More Electronically Based FDLP. The assumptions are based on congressional intent and direction, technological developments, and budgetary realities.

1. The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) will be primarily electronic.
2. The law will be revised so that electronic information is clearly in scope for the FDLP. Agency participation in the FDLP will be required.
3. These factors will lead to changes in the structure of the FDLP.
4. The funding available to the FDLP from the legislative branch appropriation will not exceed the current level.

#### DISCUSSION SUMMARIES

The Depository Library Council devoted a considerable portion of the fall 1995 meeting to discussions centered around the GPO study and strategic planning process and the transition of the FDLP to a more electronically based program. Below are summaries of the

discussion groups which focused on the following areas: Legislative/legal issues, library issues, and GPO issues. Attendees at the Council meeting participated in one of these three concurrent discussion sessions. Council wishes to express its appreciation to all the attendees of the fall meeting for their cooperation and participation in these discussion sessions, and to GPO and the executive working group for the opportunity to provide direct input to the study process.

#### A. LEGISLATIVE/LEGAL ISSUES

1. Are the exemptions from depository publication eligibility presently in U.S.C. Title 44 still appropriate, and should they apply to electronic information (i.e., "those [publications] determined by their issuing components to be required for official use only or for strictly administrative or operational purposes which have no public interest or educational value and publications classified for reasons of national security;" and "so-called cooperative publications which must necessarily be sold in order to be self-sustaining")?

The consensus of the discussion group was that government information should be defined as broadly as possible in regard to format. "Government information products and services" is the key phrase, irrespective of format.

The current language indicating that the "issuing component" should determine whether information is "required for official use only" should be revised. The basic language should be revised to define government information eligible for dissemination as broadly as possible and to place the burden of proof on the issuing agency to show that it is not appropriate for distribution. In cases of doubt, the Superintendent of Documents rather than the issuing agency should make the determination. A committee of Congress should be identified as an appellate body to resolve differences of opinion.

It was felt that the phrase "so-called cooperative publications which must necessarily be sold in order to be self-sustaining" should be deleted from the basic definition of government information in Title 44. Cooperative publications should be eligible for distribution to depository libraries, but it was recognized that this is a complex issue that needs to be further discussed and dealt with in a separate section of the law.

2. Should agencies be required or permitted to charge user fees for information developed at public expense? Are there barriers to access and usage associated with cost-recovery mechanisms?

In the current budgetary environment, it is reasonable to permit, but not require agencies to charge for user fees. However, consistent with the language of OMB Circular A-130 and the Paperwork Reduction Act, agencies should only charge users for recovery of the marginal cost of dissemination. This is a principle to which we should adhere.

User fees do present barriers to use, as does information requiring specialized equipment, such as computers, microfiche readers, or software to access. One of the values of the depository library program is the expertise and equipment participating libraries can offer to



the public. Information should be available to the public free in depository libraries, although this does not imply access to free printing or free disks for downloading.

Government information is created for and paid for by the public. There are many users of government information--from "big industry" to small business people to individual citizens. Information should be available in a usable format, free. Users might pay for "value-added" "bells and whistles."

The issue of printing is problematic. It is not reasonable to expect the library to pay for printing a 500-page document so that a library user can read it. Because of limited availability of equipment availability, most libraries cannot allow a user to tie up a terminal for a long time to browse through a very long publication and print off selected pages. This is one example of an impediment to use--that extensive documents which were once disseminated in paper and could be browsed and checked out, now must be printed out at considerable expense in order to be used. Depending upon the software used for dissemination and for printing, the resulting document may also be less attractive and less useful than its original print edition.

Currently, the variety of formats and software associated with government information presents impediments to use. Librarians may not have updated equipment with sufficient storage capacity to run CD-ROMs most efficiently. With such a variety of interfaces, it is difficult to develop the expertise to assist with each and every database.

There may be insufficient machines for all of the users. Where once twenty users could simultaneously use twenty different print titles or issues, a small depository library may be limited to one or two terminals to access those twenty information resources when available solely in electronic form. Information should be available at access points appropriate to the level of use of the product, and the number of users in the congressional district.

3. Who should pay for depository CD-ROMs or other electronic information products and services not produced through GPO (e.g., agencies, GPO, other)?

CD-ROMs ought to be treated like other publications.

The major cost of CD-ROM products is associated with development of the information product and the pressing of the master. The subsequent production of disks is done at a nominal cost. Agencies could pay for the additional cost of disks to be distributed to depository libraries, unless it is determined that this would result in a reduction in the amount of information distributed.

The cost of producing CD-ROMs may include licensing costs for software. Agencies should keep this in mind when developing information products and provide for the cost of the software licenses to depository libraries. Whenever possible it is desirable for agencies to work with GPO in developing products in order for agencies to make use of standard software interfaces available through GPO.

4. Should the current structure of selective and regional depositories be changed to reflect open access to electronic information? If so, how?

Depository libraries are essential in this transition period from print to electronic sources. A relatively small proportion of the population have their own computers, or the expertise to access online sources of information. Geography is an important factor now, and will continue to be. When there is universal access to the Internet for all citizens, then depository libraries will continue to serve an important service role--assisting the public to locate and use electronic information resources. For now and the foreseeable future, there will continue to be a value to a congressional district-based system which focuses on services to constituents.

In an electronic environment, the number of participating libraries in the depository library program could be expanded, so that many more libraries could assist users with electronic information resources. Even citizens in rural areas would not have to travel a long distance to use the services of a depository. In order to expand the depository library program to include many more libraries, we need to make connecting libraries to the Internet an important priority. The concept of universal service should be preserved. Currently, access to the Internet is fairly low-cost. In the future, as the private sector becomes dominant in development of the NII, costs may be much higher, yet another reason to connect all libraries to the Internet and to preserve the principle of no-fee access in the depository libraries.

Regionals are defined by service responsibilities, not by constituents. Title 44 should be amended to make the requirements for regionals more flexible.

5. What are the responsibilities of depositories, issuing agencies, GPO, the National Archives, and/or other partners in preserving electronic government information?

Both long-term access and preservation are key concerns in government information. In the past, libraries have maintained access to government information long after the issuing agencies disseminated the information. The public has been able to access long runs of information in the depository libraries. Although NARA technically provided the preservation, depository libraries provided usable access.

Ultimately, the National Archives and Records Administration should be given the authority and appropriation to both preserve government information in electronic formats and make it accessible.

Agencies also have a responsibility, in the development of information plans and products, to consider long-term access for the information products they develop. The Government Printing Office serves as an important model for access to electronic products. Through electronic storage sites, GPO plans to ensure access to information in its custody. Users will be able to access current information in an online mode on GPO Access and the GPO bulletin board. Older information can be accessed "near line" from the storage sites, although the interface may be seamless to the user.

Other models are developing. Library consortiums and other institutions may develop cooperative projects with agencies to make information accessible.

Redundancy is highly desirable in preserving and continuing to make electronic information accessible, precisely because there are few or no print counterparts preserved.



6. How can users determine if they have "official" information? Can or should electronic information be authenticated?

There was insufficient time to discuss this topic. The audience briefly responded that authentication was highly desirable. In later open discussion during the meeting, it is apparent that the legal profession needs to move to accept electronic formats as the "official" edition.

This question is also related to that of access and preservation. Speakers indicated that it was essential to be able to access historical editions of constantly updated works, for example, in order to determine what law or regulation was in effect at a given time.

## B. LIBRARY ISSUES

1. How will depository libraries cope with the following administrative, service, and cost burdens that will likely accompany an increasingly electronic FDLP?

- (a) Technology - the need to procure, install, and maintain additional computer equipment, telecommunications services, and software.

Libraries will have to cooperate with other units on campus or within agencies to plan for increased telecommunications capabilities, more phone lines, etc. With increasing reliance on the Internet as a source of government information, workstations will become multi-use, i.e., patrons will be using these workstations for e-mail, etc., in addition to locating government information. This will put more pressure on the resources and might force libraries to restrict use of the facilities. Public libraries especially do not have access to the systems support that many academic libraries have. One benefit of the electronic depository is that libraries will not have to negotiate site licenses individually; access to electronic resources will be provided through the depository system.

One coping mechanism which transcends providing equipment for government information in electronic resources is the trend for some academic institutions to require students to provide their own laptop computer. This is not a solution for public libraries, school libraries, or even most academic institutions.

It would be useful if GPO were a coordinating agency which would coordinate standardization of software used for all government information products. If recognized standards such as Z39.50 and HTML were used for government information products, it would simplify access by the public.

- (b) Human resources - the need for additional technically skilled staff to operate electronic facilities in the library, and to assist users with electronic information services.

Adequate technical support staff is critical. Right now, many librarians are being called upon to learn and perform many technical and operational maintenance skills formerly unrelated to librarianship, which further stretches their time. Some librarians are resisting

this trend. New output measures need to be developed for service such as the number of hours spent trying to reach certain URLs, etc.

Librarians are becoming consultants and the organizers of information, creating local home pages, etc. With the increased use of electronic resources and its labor intensive instructional needs, library personnel will have to be reallocated from other areas to public services, including providing assistance with accessing government information.

Should Congress be assisting with training and development of depository staff's skills in support of the electronic environment? Perhaps GPO should become more of a training agency. It might become, along with librarians, more of an educational service rather than an information service. GPO might train staff from libraries in how to access electronic information and they might also coordinate training for agency publishers in how to publish their data so it is useful to the general public.

- (c) Local printing expenses and reader services - as printed documents give way to electronic media, libraries will face rising costs and administrative burdens in order to meet users' needs and demands for hard copy.

Issues raised included the dilemma of providing the paper to print documents in electronic format; should this service be provided free or do libraries charge for it?

- (d) Loss of selectivity and control - the inherently expansive nature of Internet access could, in effect, make every library a "regional" for electronic information. The transient state of some information on the Internet complicates access and bibliographic control, and undermines the concept of reliable access to materials not selected by a library.

Participants echoed the issues identified above and did not provide any real ways to cope with this situation. Some felt that having access to "everything" enhanced services by giving users the ability to make their own selections. At the same time, the function of developing a focused collection that meets the needs of local users is a strength of libraries, as well as an efficient use of time, skills, and resources.

2. If electronic information is "free" over the Internet, what would motivate a library to become or continue as a depository?

Economics is still a driving force for many libraries to retain depository status. Depository libraries will still have "free" access to databases that private users will have to pay for. Librarians also were caught up in intangibles such as the prestige of being a depository library. Some also felt depositories would continue to serve an archiving function. Libraries serve as a clearinghouse for government information.

3. What are depository library obligations when the Superintendent of Documents (SOD) points to information freely accessible at Federal activity sites?

We did not address this issue.



## C. GPO ISSUES

Before any thoughts as to how to answer these questions can be attempted, an underlying philosophy of the depository library program must be established. No fee access to government information must be guaranteed. Access to government information is for the "common good," and this principle should be emphasized and not forgotten. Additionally, GPO must have the regulatory authority to make agencies comply with Title 44 and provide information to depository libraries.

1. What is the role of the SOD with respect to electronic information freely accessible at other Federal activity sites?

These sites should be pointed to; the Pathway project is an appropriate role to undertake.

Interagency agreements should be worked out, a contractual agreement. A legal framework will make the process (information exchange) work better (Dept. of Energy as an example).

Electronic information must be defined. Does it include e-mail among agency employees or electronic discussion group archives? The business of government may be seen in snippets of electronic communication. These have not previously been seen as documents for distribution to depository libraries. This might be internal from the agency's view, but should actually be publicly disseminated.

Identify what the public and the user community want and need and go after that information. Recognizing the limited number of personnel at GPO, information needs could be prioritized based on community information needs assessment.

GILS will facilitate identification of agency electronic information resources. NARA may also use GILS to identify agency material not archived.

GPO should have a centralization role. Identification of and referral to electronic information should be a major responsibility of the GPO/SOD.

2. What arrangements can or should GPO make to obtain free access for depositories when an agency or its non-government agent charges?

First it must be identified as to whether or not an agency has an exemption from providing information for inclusion in the depository library program.

Agencies must be educated as to their responsibility to provide information for inclusion in the Depository Library Program. Just because agencies charge for information does not relieve them of their responsibility to provide access to depository libraries.

Examples already exist where the SOD pays for information to be disseminated to depository libraries. This option should be explored further.

3. What are appropriate criteria for converting paper products for direct electronic access or to physical electronic format? What should be the mix of media formats (e.g. CD-ROMs, diskettes, etc.), and what types of files should be available (e.g., ASCII, system-formatted, PostScript, etc.)?

GPO should establish focus groups to determine user needs. GPO should not make this decision alone. User needs and usability must be a high priority when determining conversion to electronic format.

A list of titles that should never be available solely in electronic format must be established.

Cost savings cannot be the sole reason for converting to electronic format.

Is the material appropriate for electronic format? There must be a policy statement for conversion of information to electronic format.

Accessibility to electronic information by depository libraries must be in a usable format. Recognizing that agencies create data sets and other electronic files for their needs, depository library users may have other uses for these data. Is a new role for GPO a software development role? Should GPO provide depositories with software enabling them to access information not now accessible (e.g., the climatological data CD-ROMs recently received)?

Software for products must be useful to the public user. A common software, open and portable formats should be a goal.

4. What should be the modes for direct electronic access to information storage and retrieval sites (e.g., Internet, modem, etc.)?

GPO must recognize that multiple modes of access will be required because of the varying technological capabilities of depository libraries.

Should GPO pay for Internet Access? In some cases the infrastructure is not there for Internet access. Congressional assistance is needed to establish an infrastructure. Satellite receivers could be placed at libraries.

Regionals could serve as gateways for selective libraries. Recognizing that not all regionals are able to do this, GPO could help support them so that they may carry out these responsibilities.

GPO should explore partnerships with state library networks.

Although some libraries may withdraw from the depository library program, others may join as electronic depositories.

A network of technologists is needed to provide assistance and training to depositories.



Is archiving included in "information storage and retrieval"?

GPO Access Act established the electronic storage facility. This should be used by GPO and other agencies for archiving. Preservation should be negotiated at the same time accessibility is negotiated, through interagency agreements.

5. What criteria should be used to determine the availability and method of delivery of electronic files at SOD sites?

If GPO points to data stored by agencies from Pathway, then there must be a contractual agreement between GPO and the agency to provide for continued access should the agency disappear (e.g., OTA) or the agency no longer sees a need for the data.

Interface options are within the control of GPO. FTP, Bulletin Board, WWW are all options. A protocol that supports the file format in which the author intended the document to look must be one of the options.

The cost of delivery to libraries must be considered. How long will Internet access be free? If the cost of delivery does not remain free to the library, it must still remain free to the user.

Free public access must be defined. Does this mean copies at the user end?

6. What is the responsibility of GPO/FDLP in providing access to electronic files not immediately available online?

What is appropriate for immediate online dissemination must be defined.

A bibliographic record should identify and confirm existence of data as well as indicate how data may be retrieved.

Retrieval should be seamless to the user, Pathway should point to data and retrieve, whether online or stored.

Another option would be to press data to a CD-ROM and distribute to depository libraries when the data is no longer available online.

Mirror sites should be established.

Provisions for distributed preservation of electronic data (in portable electronic formats) are necessary.

A role for GPO is to ensure that electronic information is preserved and able to be refreshed, somewhere.

Libraries should inform GPO of any preservation activities for government information they are undertaking. GPO should make this information available to other depository libraries. By knowing what is being preserved, we will also know what needs to be

preserved. (This actually led into discussion about subject-oriented depository collections. If a library was committing money, staff time, and space to preserving materials, they would have the subject expertise to provide subject-specific reference or ILL services).

At least three virtual government information libraries could be established around the country. They would act as storage facilities as well as being able to provide accessibility to data (separate entities, like the bookstores).

#### SUMMARY (GPO Issues)

The basic philosophy of the Federal Depository Library Program remains the same in an electronic environment, that is, no-fee public access to government information. For this to be maintained (or strengthened) GPO must have regulatory authority to enforce an agency's participation in the FDLP. As agencies provide more electronic information, GPO must have a mechanism in place to identify what is "out there," Pathway will meet this need. The information must be accessible via a number of different modes (WWW, dial-up, etc.) so that libraries without state-of-the-art technology will still have access to information. Beyond identification, GPO must enter into interagency agreements that will allow depository library access to an agency's electronic information. These agreements should be contractual and should include elements of dissemination and preservation.

GPO will have to take on new roles in the electronic environment. Possible additional roles include software development, so that agency information will be transferred to the depository library in a usable format; conversion of format of information, this may mean not just riding agency production orders; and training librarians in the use of electronic information and educating agencies in the production of information for public users.





# **Alternatives for Restructuring the Depository Library Program:**

**a Report to the Superintendent of Documents  
and the Public Printer  
from the Depository Library Council**

**September 1993**

At their fall 1992 advisory meeting, the Depository Library Council to the Public Printer explored possible ways of restructuring the Federal Depository Library Program. The results of their deliberations were compiled into a report to the Superintendent of Documents and the Public Printer which was published as a "discussion draft" in the June 20, 1993 issue of Administrative Notes (v. 14, #13). Comments from members of the depository library community were solicited, received, and incorporated into the final report, which appears in the following pages.

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Assumption 5: The Depository Library Program will contain both print and electronic information for the foreseeable future.

Assumption 6: As a result of the increased availability of electronic information via the INTERNET and other sources, user expectations concerning access to all forms of information will change and increase.

Assumption 7: Information professionals, in their roles as intermediaries, will continue to be a key part of the program.

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- I. Rename the program to recognize changes brought on by the era of electronic information.
- J. Downsize the program to meet budgetary constraints.



## Preface

Members of the depository library community have discussed the need to restructure the Depository Library Program for many years. This issue became critical in 1992-1993, as the Government Printing Office continued to try to respond to the twin pressures of the budget and the development of new means of information delivery using new technology.

In its fall 1992 meeting, the Depository Library Council decided to take the initiative to move the discussion forward by identifying the important assumptions about the program along with a variety of alternatives for restructuring.

The results of the Council's work are presented in this report to the Public Printer and to the depository community. In addition to using its own ideas, members of the Council also received significant input and assistance from other members of the community in the preparation of different sections of this report. Although no one on the Depository Library Council agrees with everything here, everyone does agree that the program needs to be restructured to meet the current challenges. It is no longer viable to simply maintain the status quo. We also agree that the ideas presented here deserve to be debated in the hope of coming to a new consensus about the future of the Depository Library Program. If this report serves as a catalyst for that discussion, then it will have served its most important purpose.

Robert L. Oakley, General Editor

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## **I. History and Objectives of the Depository Library Program**

### **A. History of the Depository Library Program**

The Depository Library Program (DLP) is a national resource network designed to ensure free public access to government produced and published information. The commitment to public access to government information can be traced back to 1857 when it was resolved that printed documents should be made available to the public through official sources. In 1859, the Secretary of the Interior was given the statutory authority and responsibility to distribute all books (except those earmarked for the special use of Congress or Executive Departments) printed or purchased for the use of the Federal Government. Ten years later, the Superintendent of Public Documents was created within the Department of the Interior and charged with the custody of government publications and their distribution.

Through the Printing Act of 1895, the Superintendent of Public Documents was renamed the Superintendent of Documents and transferred from the Interior Department to the Government Printing Office which had been established in 1860. The Superintendent of Documents was given authority for the distribution and sale of government documents as well as for maintaining the Depository Library Program. In addition, the Printing Act of 1895 laid the groundwork for bibliographic control over government information and expanded the number of libraries eligible to participate in the Program. The Depository Library Act of 1962 established the network of regional libraries and further increased the potential number of depository libraries. It also expanded the number of categories of publications available for depository distribution. Efforts to reorganize the Government Printing Office and the Depository Library Program in 1979 were unsuccessful.

While the law has undergone several revisions over the years, the guiding principles of the Program have remained constant:

- 1) with certain specified exemptions, all government publications shall be made available to depository libraries;
- 2) depository libraries shall be located in each State and Congressional district in order to make government publications widely available; and
- 3) these government publications shall be available for the free use of the general public.

Historically, the Federal Government and the depository library community have shared equitably the costs associated with providing free public access to government information.

In recent years however, the trend has been for depository libraries to absorb more of the cost of providing citizens with government produced information. During the past decade, GPO's budget has remained relatively constant while the cost of producing and distributing the information has skyrocketed. At the same time, government information in electronic formats, such as CD-ROM, have placed additional burdens on the GPO. As a result, libraries have had to take on the additional expense of locating and acquiring fugitive



Federal documents as well as the costs associated with computer/CD-ROM workstations, software, and technical support.

The Depository Library Program is currently faced with two separate, but interrelated needs. First, GPO's funding must be increased to adequately fulfill the goals of the Depository Library Program. To help achieve that goal, GPO must exert its potential to be the primary information packager for the Federal Government. Second, the depository library system must be reorganized in a way that will relieve some of the financial overhead from the program, while at the same time continuing to provide the American public with ready access to government information. The focus of this paper will be to document and explore the problems associated with the existing structure of the DLP and to offer some alternatives and strategies for its reorganization.

## **B. Values & Objectives of the Program**

Describing the Depository Library Program, former Public Printer Danford L. Sawyer commented that countless Americans of all ages are using materials distributed through the DLP. He observed that it is one of the least recognized and most unique resources of our American public. No other nation in the world, he argued, has anything comparable in scope or in freedom of public access.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is hard to imagine any other program within the Federal Government that is able to reach more Americans in such an economical manner.

Consisting of over 1400 libraries throughout the country, the DLP is predicated on the notion that all U.S. Federal documents--regardless of content or format--should be readily available to the American people. In addition, the Depository Library Program provides an effective, low cost mechanism for Federal agencies to disseminate government information to virtually every Congressional district in the United States.

The result of these two factors is considerable. Through the distribution of all types and levels of government publications, the DLP has consistently met the research and information needs of the American public. Indeed, it is the diverse needs of the end-user that drives the program and makes it a vital source of information for citizens nationwide. Small businesses use census data; farmers use climatological data; and anyone may use legal and regulatory information. This program is vital to the economy insofar as the engine of the economy is the small businessman, farmer, or entrepreneur. At the same time, by ensuring public access to agency-produced information, the DLP has also helped to facilitate the accountability and openness of the Federal Government.

Finally, the DLP has significantly enhanced the collections of depository libraries and consequently their ability to serve the public. In return, depository libraries invest considerable time, money and staff to receive, process, house, preserve and service the material. Indeed, according to the latest information available, the 52 regional depository libraries alone are spending more money to support their depository collections than the Federal Government is to run the entire program. Unfortunately, libraries are currently

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<sup>1</sup> "Public Printer Supports Depository Library Program," Public Documents Highlights, 48/49 (October/December 1981): 1

facing the same fiscal restraints as the Federal Government and are unable to continue the status quo. It is imperative that the equitable balance that once existed between libraries and the Federal Government for supporting the Depository Library Program be re-established.

## **II. Assumptions**

In considering the possible restructuring of the Depository Library Program members of the Depository Library Council made several assumptions.

**Assumption 1: A Depository Library Program should be and will continue to be a vital link between the citizens of the United States and the agencies of American government.**

Central to the basic program objectives of most Federal agencies is the provision of government information to the public, and for some agencies information dissemination is their principal mission. Most agencies that are heavily involved in information dissemination rely on the depository library system as one of several mechanisms for making their information available to the public; other mechanisms have historically included the Government Printing Office's document sales service, the Commerce Department's National Technical Information Service, private contractors, and agency programs to distribute their own products or to maintain information centers, bulletin boards, and other dissemination services.

Among all mechanisms, however, the depository library system is unique, in that it embodies the obligation of a democracy to keep all its citizens informed. In the spirit of its mission, it insures that agencies have an effective means of disseminating their information, and that the public has access to it regardless of economic status. In many cases it represents not only the primary, but also the only means that many citizens have of gaining access to the vast amount of government information. It also provides an important link between agencies and their user communities.

In addition to serving as a primary disseminator, the depository library system satisfies the requirement for long-term availability, serving as an "active archive" to which agencies can send their clients for information products no longer in production or inventory.

As agencies deemphasize traditional paper and film in favor of more efficient and, over time, less expensive electronic information products and services, they will continue to need a nationwide library system through which government information, current and historical, remains physically, financially, and technologically accessible to the general public. As the traditional depository library system adapts to these changes, agencies will require more feedback from libraries than they have historically received concerning who their library clients are and how these changes will affect them.



**Assumption No. 2:** As currently structured, the Depository Library Program is floundering so badly that its very existence is threatened. The Depository Library Council believes that significant restructuring of the Program is needed to ensure its future viability and to ensure that it will continue to meet the objectives for which it was established. The purpose of this report is to set out and explore several alternatives by which such restructuring might be accomplished.

By any measure, the current structure of the depository library system is inadequate, inefficient, and ineffective. The introduction of electronic products and services into the program has exacerbated already existing problems, and the failure to develop an online service as part of the program has made GPO largely irrelevant for agencies seeking to disseminate information in that manner.<sup>2</sup> As a result of these problems, neither the information dissemination needs of government agencies nor the information needs of the public are being met.

For over 30 years, library literature has called for the restructuring of the DLP. More recently, the Government Documents Roundtable of the American Library Association (GODORT), the Depository Library Council, and the GPO itself have all suggested alternatives for a revitalized program. While no action has been taken on any of these proposals, preliminary agendas from the 103rd Congress indicate that now may be the ideal time for legislative reform.

To be more specific, in 1988, Peter Hernon and Charles McClure, long time observers and critics of the Depository Library Program, identified several weaknesses within the existing program:

- The DLP is not a formal interlocking network of libraries; instead it is a diverse assortment of libraries with different goals and objectives and no coordinated collection development.
- The geographic distribution of depository libraries creates an abundance of libraries in some areas of the country but leaves a shortage in other areas.
- Neither the program itself nor the participating libraries have made as effective use of the new technologies for improved service as they could have.
- Selection of "high quality" vs. "low quality" documents is difficult because of item number groupings.
- Member libraries exercise limited direction and control over the depository program.

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<sup>2</sup> We understand that when the National Technical Information Service announced its bulletin board, many agencies expressed interest in using the system as a means of public access, thus bypassing GPO and the Depository Library Program.

- There is frequently a lack of adequate support from host institutions in terms of personnel, physical facilities, and budget.
- Poorly trained staff frequently service the depository collection.
- Substantial differences exist in the quality of reference and referral services among depository libraries.
- Variations exist among regional libraries concerning the provision of interlibrary loan, reference service, and assistance to depository libraries under their jurisdiction.
- Many libraries provide only limited bibliographic control over their depository publications.<sup>3</sup>

The development of new technologies has exacerbated the problems in many of these areas. For example, dissemination of information in electronic formats has necessitated the purchase of computerized workstations complete with CD-ROM drives, modems, and software. Additionally, staff's ability (or inability) to access digital information has widened the differences that already existed in the quality of reference/referral services offered by depositories. New technologies have also exposed the woeful lack of training and support that depository libraries receive from Federal agencies.

**Assumption 3. The burdens on the regional libraries are causing a breakdown in the system. The Depository Library Council believes that it may not be necessary for all 52 regional libraries to keep everything in perpetuity, and that other aspects of the responsibilities of the regionals also need to be re-examined.**

The current "Regional Depository Library System" was created by the Depository Library Act of 1962. This act allows a maximum of two depository libraries per state to be designated regional depositories, or "regionals." In addition to the obligations required of all depositories, the regionals have the following additional responsibilities:

1. Permanently retain all (100%) of government publications distributed through the Depository Library Program. (Selective depositories have only a minimum five-year retention period, and they may select any percentage of publications distributed).
2. Attempt to complete their retrospective collections of Federal Government publications by means of purchase, exchange, or gift.
3. Permit selective depositories to dispose of unwanted government publications, after reviewing disposal lists submitted by the selectives. Regionals screen the lists in order to add to their own collections and to ensure future availability of those titles in

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Hemon and Charles McClure, *Public Access to Government Information: Issues, Trends, and Strategies* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp., 1988), 367-69.



their region. Regionals must also make sure that the publications on the lists are offered to other libraries in the area before being discarded.

4. Provide interlibrary loan and reference service based on their regional collection to all depository and non-depository libraries in their region.
5. Contribute to the effectiveness of the depository network in their region through workshops, training sessions, and consulting services (including designation and termination of selective depositories).
6. Take an active part in the GPO depository inspection process, preferably by accompanying library inspectors on their visits.

Citing these extra responsibilities, one library recently relinquished its regional status, and others are seriously considering doing so. They can no longer accept the level of burden placed upon them. A number of factors have contributed to this situation and have led to major discrepancies in the ability of regionals to perform their additional responsibilities.

One of the factors is the geographic distribution of depository libraries. Since the number of depositories per state varies widely, and since most states have only one designated regional (that in some cases is responsible for other states as well), there is a severe imbalance in the ratio of selectives being served by the 51 regionals. As a result, inequities range from nine out of 51 regionals serving 40% of all depositories to nine regionals serving only 6% of the libraries in the depository system. Two regionals (the California and New York state libraries) alone are responsible for 14% of all selective depositories.

Another factor affecting the regionals' ability to serve selective depositories within their region is the cost of being a regional depository. The estimated annual cost per regional library to provide the required services and maintenance of its Federal document collection in 1991 was approximately \$500,000; the annual cost for all regionals therefore is about \$26 million, more than the total GPO budget for the Depository Library Program.<sup>4</sup> Most regionals do not have adequate resources--staff, space, equipment, and funding for training, travel, indexes, collection development, and telecommunications--to carry out all of their obligations under the law. Depository publications may come to the library free of charge, but considering GPO's estimate of \$100,000<sup>5</sup> for the value of documents received annually by the regionals, the regionals spend five times as much annually as the value of the collection received in the same period in order to fulfil their responsibilities.

These problems are compounded by the increase in electronic government information being distributed through the Depository Library Program. Will regionals be expected to provide the same level of services for government information distributed in CD-ROM,

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, "Government Information as a Public Asset", 102nd Cong., 1st sess., April 25, 1991, 24-25, (hereinafter cited as "Government Information as a Public Asset").

<sup>5</sup> See "Estimated Monetary Value of Depository Collections" 4 Administrative Notes, 4 (May 1983).

online databases, and via satellite transmission that they now do for paper and microfiche formats--ensuring all depository items are available and accessible within their region? Very few regionals, if any, are equipped to provide training, service, and access to all electronic depository information as part of their required reference and interlibrary loan service to libraries in their region.

**Assumption 4. The cost of running the Depository Library Program is increasing faster than the willingness/ability of Congress to provide the funds. If this pattern continues, a way needs to be found to leverage the available resources.**

Costs for the Depository Library Program come out of the Salaries and Expenses (S&E) portion of GPO's annual appropriation. Approximately 83.4% of the S&E appropriation funds this program. The other 16.6% funds three other programs. In FY 1992 GPO received just over \$27 million for these four programs. While it is true that the S&E funding went up by \$1.5 million in FY 1991 and by \$1.3 million in FY 1992, the effects of inflation over time have significantly reduced the purchasing power of the S&E dollars.

In 1980 the S&E appropriation was \$23.2 million. By 1992 it had increased \$3.9 million to \$27.1 million. This amount, representing a nominal 16.8% increase, has the buying power of 13.5 million 1983 dollars - a net loss of 50.2% in real terms. The depository library portion of the S&E appropriation sustained an even greater loss in purchasing power (50.4%). In FY 1980, GPO had \$17.1 million for depository library distribution; in FY 1992, GPO had \$22.6 million. What appears to be \$5.5 million in growth, when adjusted for inflation, represents purchasing power of \$11.2 million in FY 1983 dollars,<sup>6</sup> a loss of \$5.9 million in constant (1983) dollars.

It is also important to note that during this same time period, GPO added 50 new libraries to the program, thereby requiring GPO to serve more libraries with less money.

**Assumption 5. The Depository Library Program will contain both print and electronic information for the foreseeable future.**

Over the last 25 years, the Depository Library Program has witnessed changes to the formats that are distributed by the Government Printing Office to libraries. Once almost exclusively a print-based program, some sets began to be distributed in microform in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Now, a substantial part of the total distribution is made in microform. In the meantime, many agencies have begun to create information products in electronic form, and the need to distribute that information through the program has become evident. Moreover, as the public has become more computer literate, it is requesting access to certain products in an online form. Among the most conspicuous requests for online versions of existing products are the requests for an online Congressional Record and an online Federal Register. The Toxic Release Inventory is a popular product, available online

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<sup>6</sup> Russell, Judith C., "GPO Update" in 13 Administrative Notes 3, at 6-7 (August 15, 1992).



from the National Library of Medicine, not from GPO, and not through the Depository Library Program.

Response by GPO to the need to distribute electronic information has been tentative and hesitant at best, rather than assertive and forward looking. Consistent with its past practices, GPO has been willing to distribute information products on disk through the depository program. Examples include the National Trade Data Bank, the Toxic Release Inventory, and several others. However, GPO has been reluctant to explore bulletin boards and other online technology to make online information more readily available. Nonetheless, the Depository Library Council believes that the trend toward electronic distribution is well established and will grow rather than shrink. As a result, we believe that for the foreseeable future, the program--if it survives at all--will have to combine access to information in many forms, some print, some on disk, and some electronic online.

Some materials will or should stay in print (and some should be available in both print form and electronic form). Among them are the core materials (Congressional Record, Federal Register, etc.) that are distributed widely and read closely so that citizens can stay abreast of the actions and activities of their government. These materials are of such vital importance to our democratic society that access to them should not be restricted to those that have access to a computer. Also included in the list of materials that should remain in print are those that are intended to be read cover to cover, rather than merely checked as a reference. These include booklets, reports to consumers, brochures, etc. People read faster from paper than from screens. Similarly, reports and items containing complex material should also, in many cases, be distributed in print, because they are more intelligible when viewed in the context of a whole document rather than as isolated screens. Finally, some materials require browsing. Large amounts of text cannot be browsed easily from a computer file.

On the other hand, numeric data and other materials are often intended to be used as computer files, and they must be published electronically. In such cases, paper publication is both unnecessary and wasteful. Software to support such statistical applications is readily available, but documentation of the data on tape or on CD-ROM is still needed to facilitate the extraction and downloading of data.

Furthermore, dynamic databases such as economic statistics need to be updated regularly, and must be available online so that people can have access to the latest data. Both CD-ROM and print publication delay the transfer of this important information.

Many items, however, can be stored on CD-ROM or tape and printed on demand. Examples of publications that might be distributed in this way include Congressional hearings and other voluminous files used primarily for reference. In these cases, the library could save the space previously required in the library for paper, but the user could quickly get a print of the specific material they needed. One of the highest costs of being a depository is the cost of space, and the probability of any government or academic institution creating more space for the storage of paper material is decreasing with each passing year.



**Assumption 6:** As a result of the increased availability of electronic information via the INTERNET and other sources, user expectations concerning access to all forms of information will change and increase.

The number of people with access to the Internet has been increasing at an accelerating rate for the last several years. With the passage of the NREN legislation in the 102d Congress, the network will continue to expand in both speed and capacity. In the 103d Congress, H.R.1757 and S.4 contain provisions designed to follow up on the original NREN legislation and to extend network access much further, most especially into schools and libraries throughout the country. Since the concept is a high priority to Vice President Gore and the program is an important part of the Clinton-Gore economic stimulus package, it can be expected that the provisions of H.R.1757 and S.4 will be passed in some fashion. As a result, it seems likely that connectivity to the Internet/NREN will be available to all libraries within the next few years. In addition to providing wider access to electronic information, the Internet will also help individual libraries save on storage space by providing them with the ability to download only what they need for their clients.

In addition to the investment being made at the Federal level, investments in telecommunications are also being made at the local, state and regional levels. Several states are building statewide networks that will help to bring high speed networks into schools and libraries, and quite possibly, even into the home. No doubt, these governmental investments will continue for the next 5 - 10 years, making it increasingly possible for more people to gain electronic access to all types of information.

As more people have access to the network and more information is available over it, there is little doubt that the net will quickly become a primary vehicle for the delivery of basic information to American citizens. This vision is already taking shape with the development of local Freenets which make available, among other things, community information, news, and weather, as well as local, state, and Federal Government information.

**Assumption 7:** Information professionals, in their roles as intermediaries, will continue to be a key part of the program.

As these new networks develop, citizens will face an increasingly complex information world. Faster networks, electronic storage of information and telecommunications have already exponentially increased an individual's opportunity to access and receive information. Information sources have also increased with, for example, over 2,000 vendors already producing CD-ROM's. In addition, the proliferation of new information technologies used in the home, such as fax and interactive video, has made citizens acutely aware of their power and potential. With all these information resources available in a variety of formats, understanding how to use and access them is critical if citizens are to be prepared to function as fully participating members of society. Information professionals such as librarians can fill an important role in helping citizens navigate through this complex information world.

All information professionals share similar traits; they know where to find the answers, how to organize information, how to communicate with man and machine, and they know



about the latest information technologies. Anyone may be able to find an answer to anything, but is it the right or the best answer? The information professional is trained to identify the best sources for quality information.

Information professionals also know how to organize information. Unorganized information is not information at all--it's just data. Take, for example, the current dilemma with the 1990 census data; in order to be replicated in the 1980 format, it needs to be processed through three separate software programs. The typical interested citizen has certain expectations regarding census information and simply handing him or her a CD-ROM containing the raw data is not satisfactory.

However, the information professional's unique skill is the ability to communicate. Webster described information as "the communication or the reception of knowledge". Understanding the logic stream to a question, and translating it back to the individual, demands unique communication skills that cannot be replaced by artificial intelligence, at least not in the near future.

The information professional also plays a critical role in the development of more useful and usable information products and technologies. No one works more closely with the end-user, knows the requirements of the user better, and can have a greater impact on the future of information technology than the information professional.

While all of this is true, the rapid pace of change also makes it necessary for librarians to be constantly updating their skills, to learn to manage information using the newest electronic systems. In addition, in view of the large number of datafiles being distributed, librarians also need training in manipulating numeric data and responding to requests for information presented in a tailored fashion. Extraction of data from CD-ROM or tape, for example, will require more human resources in depository libraries. Librarians need to know how to manipulate the data and how to produce a custom product for each requestor.

**Assumption 8: In the new information environment, there will be many more diverse points of access to information. The traditional library will be one centralized place for information, but there will be others as well.**

With the new information environment, users may not need to come to the library to fill their information needs. Electronic information allows dial-in access from a number of locations. While the traditional library will be one centralized place for information, other locations may exist as well. The establishment of the National Research and Education Network, which will build an information "super highway," guarantees access to government information for all citizens through libraries, distribution programs, community learning centers and the information highway.

Depository libraries may play the role of providing local network access and making the network function rather than simply receiving, storing, and providing access to paper copies. Like the depository library program which reaches every Congressional district, public schools reach every neighborhood in the country. Once schools are on the network, they will provide additional access points. Many other scenarios can be envisioned as local, state, and

regional networks grow and become interconnected. For example, one could go to the local government building and through a terminal there be connected to the network thereby accessing needed information. Kiosks could be set up in shopping malls, very much like the mini-libraries that now exist in some malls.

**Assumption 9: New laws, regulations, and information systems, and related changes in how government information is collected, maintained, and disseminated will have a major impact on the Depository Library Program.**

The Depository Library Program is over 100 years old and the last major revision of Title 44 was in 1962. There are many in the library/information community who infer from this fact that Title 44, as written, does not take into account new technologies and that the Government Printing Office might not have a mandate to distribute government information in new electronic formats. This remains a divisive issue.

Some have argued that GPO has statutory authority under Title 44 to disseminate all government information regardless of the format in which it is stored. GPO's General Counsel opinions in 1982 and 1989 provided different viewpoints in this debate. Another opinion from the GPO General Counsel in 1990 does expand the definition of a "government publication" to include "government information presented in an electronic format." Does this, however, provide a definitive answer? The question remains as to whether GPO can afford to embark on a new electronic course without a clearcut mission to do so.

Further, if GPO does forge ahead in the electronic arena, Federal agencies still are not mandated to provide their products and services (regardless of format) for distribution to the DLP.

In a 1991 legal opinion of the GPO General Counsel about cost sharing, there is a footnote in which it is stated that:

"Our review of the legislative history indicates that technological advancements in the field of information compilation and dissemination have outstripped, in many instances, the expectation of Congress when it passed the Depository Library Act of 1962. Regardless of this anachronism, both this office (GPO General Counsel) and the Joint Committee on Printing have construed Title 44 to encompass Government information presented in electronic format, although electronic products are not expressly included in the definition of Government publications."

Another question to consider is whether this (or previous) legal opinion(s) could be overturned or revised should there be a different General Counsel or Public Printer. "Legislative intent" is always open to interpretation unless there is definitive language contained in public laws.

Title 44 must be fully re-examined in light of the new technologies available for information dissemination. If there is a revision, it cannot and should not be done in a piecemeal manner. It is the guiding force of the GPO operations and any changes should be



positive and not done to negatively impact the depository or sales programs. All stakeholders must be part of the debate, and that includes JCP and other congressional committees which have some relationship to the operations of GPO, the depository community, library/information associations, Federal agencies, the information industry, public interest groups, and the oft-discussed "users" of government information.

It is also a given, however, that when there is a legislative overhaul of a program, it could bring out the "enemies," in this case, those who might want to restrict the scope of the program, as well as the "friends," who see a need to expand the mandate for GPO operations.

It is imperative that Members of Congress be educated about the DLP. The 110 freshmen members of the House of Representatives and the new Senators must be taught by their constituents about the value of the program and its cost-effectiveness. They must understand what the program offers to citizens--their constituents. But they must be convinced NOT only because the DLP offers an information "safety net" or that citizens are entitled to access information about their government. In these budget cutting times, there must be a case made for how the DLP provides an economic advantage to citizens, helps small businesses, aids in this country's competitiveness, etc. The new Administration in Washington came in on the theme of "change" and the DLP and the depository community must be willing to advance that theme.

This is especially important in the area of funding--how to convince Congress to adequately fund the GPO/DLP so that electronic products and services are an integral part of the depository program.

Some specific issues which should be examined in reviewing Title 44 include:

- Sec. 1911 mentions keeping permanent copies in either paper or microform--should this section also include electronic records? what if the material is available only in electronic format?
- The law calls for depositories in each Congressional district--what happens when there is redistricting, as we have seen since the 1990 Census? What changes can or should be made so that some areas of the country are not "information rich" at the expense of the "information poor"?
- Is the system of using Congressional districts for setting up depositories the best approach? Does this system offer the best framework for the dissemination of information?
- Does sec. 1903 provide a cost disincentive to agencies to provide copies of their material to the DLP since they can have their information printed elsewhere?
- The public printer has stated in congressional testimony that "legislative action is needed to clarify Title 44 and explicitly incorporate publications in electronic format."

The Office of Technology Assessment's Report "Informing the Nation," urges Congressional action to resolve Federal information dissemination issues and to set direction for future policies. Discussions about national and Federal information policy issues will have a major impact on any potential changes to the depository library system. Federal agencies are using more and more electronic products and services. Statutes should keep ahead of the times and not just play "catch up."

OMB Circular A-130 in its latest proposed revision (April 1992), while noting that Federal agencies should "ensure that government publications are made available through depository libraries," created a number of loopholes for agencies to avoid utilizing the program. The circular provides a narrow definition of a "government publication" and in essence creates a difference between paper and electronic formats. This difference would allow Federal agencies to use the argument they need not provide electronic products and services to GPO for distribution to the DLP. The writers of the circular note that:

"...the definition of "government publication" in 44 USC 1901 is: 'informational matter which is published as an individual document'.... OMB does not understand that this definition, on its face, includes electronic data files, software, online information services, or the like .... Therefore, OMB believes it is not clear that agencies have a legal obligation to make electronic products available to depository libraries."

Although the circular goes on to say that "as a matter of policy" Federal agencies should make electronic products (services are not mentioned) available to the DLP, such a negative approach sends the wrong signal to agencies. What are agency officials more likely to base their own dissemination policy on--Circular A-130 which provides guidance to executive branch agencies in the area of information policy or a legal opinion of the GPO general counsel (an agency located in the legislative branch) relating to provision of information in electronic formats?

With a new administration and therefore new officials at OMB, it is possible that there will be further revisions to A-130. Whether these revisions will take a more positive stance toward the DLP and the role of agencies remains to be seen. But it is something members of the depository community need to be aware of and they could make their concerns known as the guard changes at OMB.

As policy makers are working on "building" NREN, the depository community and the library world as a whole must be viewed as stakeholders in the process. The new administration will be closely linked to the notion of an electronic super-highway due largely to Senator Gore's work on the NREN bill and other allied legislation. There is a strong link with Senator Gore also because of his association with the JCP over the past years.

If the DLP is to have a viable role in the electronic information age, it and the community must be part of the NREN. The position paper produced by GODORT/ALA in March 1991 titled, "National Research and Education Network and the Federal Depository Library Program," provides strong arguments as to why the DLP should be included in the NREN. It might be worthwhile for the paper to be updated in light of the new administration and new agency heads being appointed.



But while there are many in the depository community who are conversant with the issues in this area, it is important that GPO is as well. There were many concerns raised during discussion of the GPO WINDO bill that the agency was not equipped to handle these new technological advances. It might be well for the agency to look to the depository community for expertise in some of these areas. This approach could forge a strong partnership between the depository community and GPO.

A final item--or rather a question for further study--is where the regional Bell operating companies (RBOC's) fit into the scheme of things. If and when RBOC's can begin offering information services, how might that development affect depositories? Will there be any impact? Will it mean more players in the information industry repackaging and selling government information? Will it help by increasing competition?

**Assumption 10: Some libraries will be partners in the change; some will not.**

As the Depository Library Program moves towards restructuring due to the addition of electronic access and/or the need to control the cost of the program, some libraries will be partners in the change, while others will not. There are already many differences in the services provided among depository libraries. With the move to electronic access, it must be accepted that some libraries will not be able to participate due to a lack of financial support, necessary equipment, or technical expertise.

While Council does not support denying information access to any depository library, it must be recognized that this may be the result if some libraries do not have the capability of handling electronic government information. The change in how government information is delivered will happen, with or without a restructured depository library program. But a restructured program will allow those depository libraries that do have electronic access to obtain that information and to assist those libraries that do not.

### **III. Alternative Scenarios for a Restructured Program**

#### **A. The ARL Model--Multiple Service Levels**

In 1988, the Task Force on Government Information in Electronic Format of the Association of Research Libraries explored the changing relationship between the Federal Government and depositories libraries. The Task Force noted that, "Government information--its creation and dissemination--is a microcosm of the elements and layers of a new paradigm for libraries" and that "the prospect of GPO providing government information in electronic format for depositories accelerates the need for libraries to address the shifting paradigm."

Recent ARL statistics illustrate the depth and breadth of this shifting paradigm and how significant the shift has become in a relatively short period of time. 1990-91 ARL Statistics provide evidence that research libraries "are increasingly moving from the traditional supply or warehouse model, to a demand or access model for providing information to users. ARL



libraries are moving from the "just in case" model of on-site resources to the "just in time" model of resource sharing."

A recent survey intended to provide a snapshot of ARL libraries' activities considered key elements of a research library of the future--electronic document delivery, electronic journals, full text database access, network access, and the like--provides additional evidence of how widespread this shift is and how it is influencing ARL libraries' services and operations. The survey found that a large number of institutions are making "notable commitments to electronic networked systems and services." (ARL, a Bi-monthly Newsletter No. 163, "Toward a Realization of the Virtual Library," Nancy Schiller, and Barbara von Wahlde) For example, 85% of the respondents are using or developing electronic document delivery services and 66% are providing access to electronic full text.

And finally, interlibrary loan data demonstrates the continuing reliance upon research libraries for resources and an increase in interlibrary loan activity. Because of the breadth and depth of their collections, research libraries tend to serve as resource collections for other libraries. As more multi-type libraries have used OCLC or RLIN for retrospective and current cataloging, the presence of their holdings in these networks has spread interlibrary loan requests among a larger number of libraries, although the general pattern of research libraries as net lenders seems to be continuing. Since 1981, while lending by ARL libraries has grown 155%, borrowing has grown by 206%. ARL Statistics for FY 1990 documents a total of 5.2 million items loaned or borrowed.

The speed with which this shifting paradigm has been introduced and integrated into research libraries can be attributed to numerous factors -- constrained budgets, the serials crisis, new opportunities and services resulting from computer and telecommunications investments and programs, changing user information needs and requirements including increased demand due to more effective bibliographic and access measures, increasing reliance upon electronic resources, and more. As noted elsewhere in this paper and in the forthcoming paper, "Problems and Issues Affecting the U.S. Depository Library Program and the GPO: The Librarian's Manifesto," (20 Government Publications Review, 121-140, (March-April 1993)) there is ample evidence that documents collections in participating depository libraries are a part of or are experiencing many of these same pressures and opportunities. These pressures result in these authors reaching the same conclusion as the ARL Task Force on Government Information in Electronic Information: that there is a pressing need to review and assess the depository library program on a number of fronts, including the questionable value of retaining its current structure given the shifting paradigm.

The ARL proposal for a restructuring of the depository program or a variation of it is still valid today. And such a reassessment of the program should be conducted in light of one central and underlying assumption: a program that provides equitable, no-fee access to basic public information for all citizens should be retained and in fact strengthened through any restructuring proposals.

There remains the commitment to the role that libraries have always played: provider of no-fee access for the general public to government information. What is highlighted by the prominence of electronic information is that not all government information is the same and that the level of user accessibility provided for electronic products varies tremendously



depending on the system characteristics provided by the government or added to it by libraries or other intermediaries. Government information defined as essential for fulfilling the citizenship information needs of the public and for fulfilling government responsibilities should be distributed to depository libraries in a manner that allows libraries to make it available at no-fee.

There is also the understanding that with the introduction of new services such as the GPO WINDO, there are also new responsibilities that must be addressed in a restructuring proposal. For example, although a library providing basic services could access the GPO Gateway directly, a user's request might be for retrospective information no longer available via the agency or GPO. The role of full service libraries vis-a-vis issues relating to indexing, archiving, and related long-term access issues will need to be addressed.

The ARL model (see Technology & U.S. Government Information Policies: Catalysts for New Partnerships, 1988) proposed the following redefinition of depository library service responsibilities in which government documents and gateways to government information would be focused along the following lines:

- **BASIC Services:**

This level of depository library would serve as an information center in which there would exist a small government document collection and a computerized gateway to electronic government information located elsewhere (e.g. GPO WINDO, an intermediate, or a full service depository). The service might be focused more on self-help and on-demand levels.

- **INTERMEDIATE Services:**

This level of depository library would maintain a larger government document collection and some electronic information and gateways to other electronic information located elsewhere. This library might devise products which would work well through the gateways and might invest in developing value-added approaches to government information. The service would include more mediation and synthesis than the basic level.

- **FULL Services:**

This level of depository library would contain research level government documents, a full range of electronic information, and the most sophisticated gateways to other electronic information. The depository collection would be supplemented by related, locally available databases. The level of service would include the highest levels of value-added characteristics. There would be developed software packages and other approaches which would change wholesale government information into retail government information. There would be some level of Federal support for the full service libraries.

Roles for depository library participants may change in some or all of the following ways. First, since requirements for equipment and staff to support a full-service electronic depository collection and the growing amount of information resources available are



considerable, the program may be well served by having just a few libraries support multi-state or national public information needs as part of the program. From this approach there may develop varying levels of responsibility for providing services for electronic and other information products. Some depository libraries may not be able to afford the equipment and/or staff support to provide services for certain kinds of government information in electronic form. Location, however, becomes less consequential given the increasing reliance upon networks for access to resources. It should be kept in mind, however, that the economics of resource sharing may be different in such an environment than what has gone before. All depositories will require equipment and staff proficiency to provide effective access to electronic resources.

## **B. The Direct Support Model<sup>7</sup>**

Depository libraries currently play only a limited role in determining the distribution policies and patterns of the depository system as a whole. The fundamental design of the present system is quite simple: regional depositories receive everything distributed by GPO; selective depositories generally opt to receive items in a recommended basic collection, plus whatever additional items are appropriate to the library's mission and responsive to the needs of the public which it serves. The information and incentives for managing the depository program, to the extent that they exist at all, are centralized at GPO.

There is a widely held perception that the obligations imposed upon regionals for (a) comprehensive receipt of publications in multiple media, (b) indefinite retention of at least one copy of each publication, and (c) service to other libraries within the region, are too burdensome and inflexible. The model of fifty-plus regional libraries all performing what is often (and incorrectly) described as an archival function, along with other functions that owe more to a paradigm of government property management than to any theory of library service, is becoming less sustainable with each passing year.

Selective depositories, for their part, are able to choose the categories of publications that they wish to receive. However, they have little incentive to consider the economic impact of their choices upon the whole depository system, and, even if they attempt to do so, they have very limited tools for participating in the optimum allocation of resources. The subject of cooperation between selective depositories is not well developed in GPO's "Instructions to Depository Libraries." Officially, at least, most cooperation must be mediated by the regional depository. Moreover, the limited autonomy that government documents departments have in most depository libraries, together with the need for the library as a whole to conform to broader institutional policies, tends to reduce the scope of potential contributions by an individual library to system-wide management.

The flaws of the present system have been more fully described in other sections of this report, and even more extensively in the growing body of literature on the subject. Many, if not all, of these flaws can be traced to a fundamental structural weakness of the system: the

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<sup>7</sup> The ideas in this section reflect some of the perspectives of the information industry. However, this section is not, and should not be construed as, a position statement of the Information Industry Association.



member libraries that serve as the critical link to the ultimate beneficiaries--the public at large--are not empowered to participate in managing the system to best advantage.

Federal funding has always been restricted to support of document reproduction and distribution, and has been estimated to constitute less than half of the full cost of the depository system.<sup>8</sup> But decisions that determine how the Federal resources will be allocated largely control the disposition of resources for the entire system. For example, the government's decision to distribute a certain proportion of titles in microform virtually mandates a certain corresponding level of expenditure by a regional library--and by many selectives as well--for the procurement of microform viewing, storage, and replication equipment, as well as for associated staffing and maintenance. Moreover, the likelihood of long-term constraints on Federal spending suggests that if the present system is maintained, there will not be enough money to continue distribution at current levels, to say nothing of meeting the complex distribution challenges posed by the growing body of agency-produced electronic publications.

The depository library program is desperately in need of ways to maximize the return on every Federal dollar expended. It is equally urgent that the system enable depository libraries themselves to show a return on their investment in the system, expressed in terms of service to the public and perhaps in terms of other institutional goals as well.

Reforming the depository system may involve many elements of change. But the one change that would most effectively align available resources with the "demand" registered by library patrons for government publications would be to give libraries control over how depository resources are allocated.

The proportion of overall depository reproduction and distribution costs that are necessary to supply a particular library with its free publications represents the germ of a budget. Each depository's budget can in fact already be considered to exist, albeit in just a latent sense in the present system. The aggregate budget for the entire depository system--a very real figure for GPO--is nothing more than the sum of the costs incurred to serve each depository, even if the latter costs are not currently isolated. The question is not whether each depository has its own budget. Rather, the question is whether the necessary information and incentives will be developed to manage that budget for the maximum benefit of the American public.

Fortunately, an essential preliminary step toward giving libraries control over how the expenditures dedicated to their support are allocated will be taken by 1994, when the GPO Library Programs Service's Acquisitions, Classification, and Shipment Information System (ACSIS) is scheduled to have the capacity to report on the cost of each depository publication distributed. This capability will make it possible to calculate the cost of supporting any depository library merely by summing the cost of all the publications that it receives, and perhaps adding to that sum a standard proportion of GPO administrative costs.

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<sup>8</sup> "Government Information as a Public Asset", nt.4, *supra* at 24-25.



The next step would be to let libraries have a voice in the disposition of the resources that are now used for their support. This is in fact already being done, but only through a sporadic, command-oriented, crisis-driven process, as represented by GPO's letter to depositories of Nov. 18, 1992 announcing certain curtailments in distribution, asking for voluntary cutbacks in depository selections, and seeking depositories' reactions to additional possible cuts. The only incentive that depositories have to curtail their selections is their hope that such action will prevent deeper future cuts affecting the entire system. In such circumstances, it is very difficult for an individual library to make rational assessments of the costs and benefits associated with GPO's "either/or" propositions.

Assuming that for the indefinite future there will be limited funding relative to the costs of distributing all Federal depository publications in a variety of media, it would be much more productive to entrust libraries with the authority to choose at the start of each Federal fiscal year how the library's share of depository funds is to be spent. This would help depository librarians to more fully evaluate the consequences of their selections and would provide a basis for making rational trade-offs. Coupled with cooperative collection development within each region, this approach would enable each library to tailor its selection practices to match its own needs much more closely than is possible today.

The question of what base should be used to determine the size of a library's individual budget obviously could be decided in various ways, but should not present an insurmountable obstacle. Perhaps selection patterns for the immediate past year, or for several previous years, would provide a basis from which to start. A library might decide not to use all of its budgeted selection authority each year. Since even free publications incur costs once they are acquired by the library, the same forces that today lead selective depositories not to select everything would continue to operate.

Once a system is in place that gives libraries responsibility for how "in-kind" government aid, in the form of free publications, is allocated, it would be attractive to consider expanding libraries' options by making Federal support available as more widely convertible credits that could be used for a variety of purposes in support of depository responsibilities. One could envision GPO's depository distribution operation becoming a more closely related adjunct to the GPO sales program, with a library "paying" for individual items with "depository credits." Eventually, ACSIS should be able to support a more dynamic selection process, so that a depository could choose to receive an individual title at any time up to GPO's placement of the replication order. The library could choose to use its credits to obtain multiple copies of some items, and items placed by GPO in its general sales program could be purchased at some time later than the date of original distribution. As electronic media move into the mainstream of the GPO sales program, and as GPO begins to take advantage of print-on-demand technology, it should be feasible to expand the number of items that are available through the sales program, and to keep them "in print" indefinitely.

Additionally, it should be possible to arrange for the use of depository credits for acquisitions on concessionary terms from NTIS. Such credits could also be applied to the purchase of dedicated electronic equipment, commercially produced document sets, and "non-government reference tools" such as those recommended in the "Guidelines for the



Depository Library System."<sup>9</sup> Software and databases from government and non-government sources would also be eligible for purchase.

Such a plan would make it clear what could be obtained, by an individual library and by the whole depository system, for a given level of expenditure. The participation of multiple suppliers would require GPO to offer high standards of service, as measured by comparison to the alternatives available to libraries rather than merely by internal assessments. Moreover, libraries would be the judges of the adequacy of that service, and could send messages in the form of choices about how they allocate their depository credits.

Such a development would actually come as good news for GPO. The burdens of depository system administration would be reduced. A rationalized depository system that empowers libraries and provides for multiple sources of supply would elicit broader support for congressional appropriations. GPO's Library Programs Service unit could emerge changed but revitalized, ready to fulfill the roles expected of it in the future.

During the spring 1992 meeting of the Depository Library Council, Superintendent of Documents Wayne Kelley noted, in the words of the official summary, that "the only truly equitable program is one where the actual value is transferred to be disposed of by the consumer."<sup>10</sup> Empowerment of the customer, the user, the voter, the taxpayer, the employee, the shareholder, or the consumer is a key feature of the sweeping political, economic, and administrative changes that are taking place today in our own society and throughout the world. Systems characterized by centralized, command-driven, and production-line forms of organization are giving way to constituent-controlled, demand-responsive, service-oriented structures. It is time to use these new structures to deliver maximum benefit for the American public's investment in depository distribution.

Depository libraries have for years been entrusted with the enduring legacy of the depository system: the extensive collections of government publications that are maintained for public use in hundreds of locations throughout the nation. They have also developed, largely on their own, the facilities and the trained staff to provide convenient access to these publications, including the electronic publications that form a growing part of depository information resources. Few would dispute that on the whole depository libraries have merited the trust that has been placed in them, and that they have done an excellent job with the available resources. It is time now to entrust to depositories all of the tools that they need to deliver government information to the people whom they serve. By empowering them to make their own decisions, the depository program will remain true to its original mission, and will be prepared to respond creatively to the challenges of a new century.

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<sup>9</sup> Guidelines for the Depository Library System, as adopted by the Depository Library Council, revised 1987, Guideline 4-2 (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1988).

<sup>10</sup> Administrative Notes, Vol 13, No. 11, May 31, 1992.

### C. A National Collection of Last Resort

The creation of a National Collection to house at least one copy of each government document printed or produced electronically would provide access, as a depository library of last resort, to copies of documents by reproduction, interlibrary loan, or electronic transmission for other depository libraries throughout the country. The primary functions of this library would be the acquisition, housing, and dissemination of a comprehensive collection of documents needed by information users around the country. In general, identification and reference to specific sources would be within the purview of the requesting depository; however, in cases where such identification is difficult or impossible except with onsite access, the librarians at the National Collection could provide some reference help and technical service type information based on their holdings. This collection would be very labor intensive, very expensive, and have an expansive level of service since it would be serving the whole nation.

The establishment of a National Collection would provide access to otherwise unavailable "fugitive" documents by requiring agencies to submit only two or three copies of items that could not be procured in large numbers. With dissemination on demand, the National Collection could house and make available to depositories those titles with limited interest and infrequent user potential that are now being distributed to and permanently retained by fifty-two regional libraries. This would be a more cost-effective solution for both the Government Printing Office and for the regional depositories. GPO monies saved on printing, binding, and distribution could be reallocated to support the National Collection. Funding in local depositories that had previously gone to process and store these items could be reallocated for other purposes.

The National Collection could be built upon an existing regional collection of exhaustive historical breadth with additional resources culled from the collections of other regionals nationwide to create a comprehensive warehouse of materials readily available to any user in the United States.

With the National Collection established, some regionals, as they are now designated, could be allowed to select less than 100% and to discard items after some defined period and after offering their material to the National Collection. Another option for current regionals would be to become a Super-Regional (see below).

This structure would meet some citizen information needs that are currently unmet by improving access to materials of limited distribution. It would also allow Federal agencies to disseminate all information to at least one location, getting information into the system that is not currently represented.

Questions to be answered include:

- How would the program be funded?
- Can the National Collection benefits justify the cost involved in implementation and operation?



- Does it reach all user groups? Urban/rural, academic/business, different geographical regions, etc.
- Is access for the user quick enough to be useful and is access certain?
- Who would be the parent organization for the National Collection and how would it mesh with other components of the depository system?

#### **D. A Network of Super-Regionals**

Like the National Collection described above, Super-Regionals would be libraries of last resort, but organized at a regional level to insure coverage for all geographic areas within that region. A Super-Regional would be designated by the Government Printing Office to serve as the "regional collection" for one of ten Federal depository regions to be defined by GPO based upon geographic distribution and population density in the United States (The Environmental Protection Agency's 10 regions would be a good model.) These depositories would provide resource sharing and other support activities to approximately five contiguous states optimally having similar industries and services.

Institutions agreeing to accept Super-Regional status must demonstrate the ability to act in that capacity based on strength of collection, adequacy of facility, commitment to continued funding, and enough staff and technical support to meet the needs of constituent depositories and of other Super-Regionals. Responsibilities for Super-Regionals might include:

- Dissemination of paper, microfiche, and electronic products;
- Continuation of the archival function of current regional depositories;
- Coordination of training activities for librarians within the defined area;
- Assistance with difficult reference questions.

Unlike a regional depository under the current structure, the Super-Regional collection would be based, at least to a degree, on the subject and geographic needs of the states in its designated region, with comprehensive coverage of materials of more universal interest. Collection development at this level would necessitate a transition from the "item selection" base to a more flexible option such as SuDocs stem or title selection in the Depository Library Program. This would eliminate the need for 52 regionals, including the Super-Regionals, to acquire and maintain ALL documents distributed by GPO while developing strong, comprehensive subject- and geographical-based "regional" collections in each of the 10 Federal Depository Regions. Also, as with the National Collection, "fugitive" documents could more easily be brought into the program if procurement of some documents were limited to 10 Super-Regionals as opposed to 52 regional depositories. Selective depository libraries in each state would also be encouraged to develop strong subject-based collections in cooperation with neighboring depositories to complement rather than duplicate

collections. In this scenario, local participants could build the strongest network possible by using their combined, unique knowledge of their region, libraries, and patron needs.

With the rapid advancement of electronic technologies and products, more and more information will be made available electronically and the capability of electronic file transfer will greatly reduce the need for warehousing as much information as is presently required. With GPO's proposed development and implementation of FIND, the Federal Information Directory, a comprehensive Federal information product and service locator system, in conjunction with advanced delivery systems and electronic transmission capabilities unavailable at the conception of the Depository Library Program as we now know it, a reduction in hard copy distribution to depository libraries could be achieved without appreciably limiting or restricting access to information. The substantial savings to GPO in the Printing and Binding budget and the reduction in distribution costs would enable GPO to reallocate funds to the development and support of Electronic Depositories or Federal Electronic Distribution Sites (FEDS). Electronic dissemination along with the change from regionals to Super-Regionals could allow for a reallocation of funds so that financing limitations at all levels of the system would be less harmful to the overall goal of information dissemination and retrieval.

Questions to be answered include:

- Would current regionals or other large libraries be willing to take on the responsibility of serving a larger area?
- What are the incentives for becoming a Super-Regional?
- How would the Super-Regional concept mesh with other components of the depository program? Would the current regionals disappear?
- Would the 10 region concept of 5 state groupings work within the current depository structure in which geographical distribution of depository libraries is very uneven?
- How would this system compare in cost with the current system? At what level and by whom will costs be absorbed?
- Does it reach all user groups?
- Is access for the user quick enough to be useful and is access certain?
- If libraries were not willing to become Super-Regionals, would a more attractive alternative be to use this same multi-state region but have regional or Super-Regional responsibilities shared by several libraries within the area?



## **E. A System of Electronic Depositories or Federal Electronic Distribution Sites (FEDS)**

The Electronic Depository concept is based on the premise that the effective use of electronic products requires special expertise and hardware and software technologies not currently available in many depository libraries. As more sophisticated products are brought into the depository system, a way must be found to use these sources in an effective, efficient manner.

Electronic depositories would evolve from those depositories currently providing the optimum level of service to the general public and from other depositories wishing to develop advanced services by specializing in electronic products and services. As designated "electronic libraries," these depositories would agree to select depository electronic products and services as they become available, regardless of electronic format. Such electronic depositories might or might not also collect selected depository items in paper.

Electronic depository libraries would take responsibility not only for receiving electronic products but also for providing support to others for access to electronic information. This type of agreement would necessarily charge these sites with a commitment to learn the developing technologies and to provide service to their constituents. Such services might include training in the use of the systems, the development of user-friendly front-ends for certain products, or other activities intended to facilitate the use of electronic government information.

In return for this enhanced responsibility, these depositories should receive supplemental support. For example, a technological advisor might be provided for at least one electronic site in each of the 10 Federal Depository Regions. This position could be funded jointly by the Government Printing Office and appropriations from each state in the Region. Each technological advisor would be expected to travel to other designated electronic sites within the Region to assist in training and development for those sites. Staff at those sites would in turn serve as resource persons for other depository libraries in the area not designated as electronic libraries.

With the further development of NREN/Internet and with the establishment of the Government Printing Office as the "gateway" to agency electronic information, it would be necessary for some FEDS to become nodes to provide access to the information infrastructure for those depository libraries not yet connected. The electronic site structure may develop slowly at first with only a handful of libraries willing to make such a drastic commitment, but as expertise is shared and more libraries become willing to embrace the technology, the emphasis will shift much more dramatically from the printed product to the electronic world. There is a real opportunity for economic efficiency if we can learn to use electronic products effectively and for improving access to certain information.

Questions to be answered include:

- Would current regionals or other large libraries be willing to take on the responsibility of having this technological expertise and serving a larger area?

- What are the incentives for becoming an Electronic Depository?
- How would the Electronic Depository concept mesh with other components of the depository program?
- How would this system compare in cost with the current system? At what level and by whom will costs be absorbed?
- Does it reach all user groups?
- Is access for the user quick enough to be useful and is access certain?

#### **F. Mandatory minimum technical standards.**

This scenario is a variation on the electronic depositories scenario. Rather than having some libraries specifically designated as electronic depositories, with all the associated responsibilities, this proposal requires all depository libraries to meet minimum technical guidelines in order to be a "full-fledged" depository library. The minimum technical guidelines should become requirements, rather than just guidelines, and be included in the "Instructions to Depository Libraries." If a library truly wants to be a full-fledged depository library, then they will have to have the required minimum workstation configuration and software, and be able to provide the associated reference service necessary to access this information.

Those libraries that are unable to meet the minimum technical guidelines could continue to be in the depository library program, but they would only receive a core collection of government information, in either paper or microfiche. None of the materials that these libraries receive would be in electronic format, and therefore they would not need the hardware, software, and technical expertise.

Some libraries may never have the necessary funds to purchase the equipment needed to meet the minimum technical guidelines. What service will these libraries be able to provide to their users if they have a CD-ROM, but no workstation in which to play it? On the other hand, such a library could serve to provide its users with basic core government information and to refer its users to another depository that can provide information beyond the core.

#### **G. A System of Subject-Based Regionals**

Many current depository libraries - both regional and selective - have developed significant expertise in one or more subject areas. The subject-based regional concept draws upon this developed expertise to provide relief to those regionals having difficulties due to lack of space, staff, and/or funding. Selective depositories with expertise in specific subject areas or those willing to develop expertise in specific subject areas could accept the obligations of comprehensive collection and service in their specialization.



The subject-based regional concept would enhance an invigorated effort to bring about closer cooperation between the information creators (agencies), the information disseminators (GPO) and information access points (libraries) to insure that information products are used to their full potential. By having a smaller pool of contacts for specific subjects, these relationships would have an improved chance of developing into a very effective tool for improved communication.

Many of the factors important in the Super-Regional concept would be valid here:

- Ability of the library to take on an added role;
- Willingness to accept the responsibilities for training, dissemination, archival functions, and reference assistance within a subject field;
- Prospects for bringing more "fugitive" documents into the system since fewer copies might be needed for special subject collections.

Questions to be answered include:

- Would current regionals or other large libraries be willing to take on the responsibility of serving a larger area?
- What are the incentives for becoming a Subject-based Regional?
- How would the Subject-based Regional concept mesh with other components of the depository program? Would the current regionals disappear? What geographic area would Subject-based Regionals be expected to serve?
- How would this system compare in cost with the current system? At what level and by whom will costs be absorbed?
- Does it reach all user groups?
- Is access for the user quick enough to be useful and is access certain?

It should be noted that there may be some significant overlap and blending of possibilities within four of the scenarios, the national library, the super-regional, the subject-based regional, and the electronic depository. For example:

- Could a Subject-based Depository for Environmental Protection also be the Electronic Depository as well as serve as the National Collection for this topic?
- Could a Super-Regional serve as the National Collection for a particular topic based on geographical area?

- With new technologies providing instant access - would an exceptional National Collection library do away with the need for Super Regionals? Would it be a better use of resources to concentrate everything at that level except for selective depositories?

**H. Recognize a new role for the depositories when electronic government information comes through a network or a single point of access, such as the GPO Gateway/Windo. Recognize that the DLP creates a foundation for building electronic dissemination systems, and that it can be a primary element in an active Federal information dissemination program**

Should there even be a Federal Depository Library Program (DLP) in an age dominated by electronic publishing on the Federal level? Is there a role for a system of library centers, geographically dispersed, acting primarily as information repositories in an environment where information can be distributed from point of origin directly to point of use without need for transmission through or storage in a library?

In response to these, and other similar questions, technologists, and many in government, often argue that the need for library service, such as the DLP, will diminish as individuals obtain the ability to access information via electronic channels. They see a system of depository libraries as an anachronism in an information environment based on high speed computer networks and such services as a GPO Gateway, a program like the NTIS FedWorld, or a Government-wide Inventory Information/Locator System (GIILS) like the one proposed by Charles McClure and his associates. Certainly, under such scenarios, the traditional role of depository libraries as repositories of Federal information offers less to the information user. Those people who can gain access to the government information they need directly from their homes, schools, and offices, or through "information kiosks" located in various public centers, are less likely to use depository libraries.

Other commonly acknowledged barriers to the DLP playing a significant role in a system featuring direct access to the databases of Federal agencies are:

- Many DLP libraries do not and will not have the technological resources to effectively handle electronic information;
- Many DLP libraries cannot, or are unwilling to, support the costs of handling electronic information or commit their resources to it;
- Federal agencies are not willing to consign the dissemination of their electronic information to the GPO;
- There is no legal authority for an electronic DLP;
- GPO is unwilling, or unable, to carry out the DLP effectively;



- GPO is primarily the printer, binder, and sales jobber for Congress and the executive agencies and the DLP is only a secondary part of its mission;
- Goals of the institutions controlling DLP libraries do not necessarily support the principles of the program;
- Ownership and care-taking aspects of information handling are unclear where electronic information is concerned; and
- The DLP libraries have a number of weaknesses including, poorly trained staff, substantial variations in quality of service, ineffective use of technology, poor geographic distribution, and a diverse assortment of libraries rather than an interlocking network.

Nevertheless, imagination and dreams of a network Utopia often cause us to overlook the fact that depository libraries are more than geographically dispersed repositories. The idea of replacing the DLP with a high-performance communication network serving citizens through gateways and GILS-like systems is supported mainly by several underlying assumptions. The first is that public and private resources will be available for, and will be committed to building a government information network from the top down. The second assumption is that a single point/direct access system will connect widely distributed and diverse Federal systems in such a way as to be easily accessible and easily manipulated by the user. The third is that this system will be the most cost effective for the Federal agencies and affordable to all potential users.

In order to duplicate and enhance what a system of electronically connected libraries could attain, a dissemination system must:

- Provide actual comprehensive/single point access to a vast array of Federal information resources in a variety of formats which represent historical as well as current data;
- Provide equity of access to the public regardless of technological ability or ability to pay for the information and some form of free access to all Federal information resources;
- Prove more cost effective to the government than supporting programs such as the DLP as a part of the system's foundation infrastructure;
- Meet a wide variety of information dissemination needs for Federal agencies;
- Meet the diverse, specific, and esoteric information needs of the general public, educators, students, researchers, and business people;
- Provide a means as an alternative to libraries to insure local connectivity to the dominant communication network;

- Provide an infrastructure of human resources that will support the need for professional consultation and guidance, research assistance, and public training.

The proposition that the DLP provides an "information safety-net" for those individuals who cannot afford either the technology or to pay for access to electronic information is not an argument upon which the DLP should base its continued existence as part of the Federal electronic information dissemination system. It relegates the DLP to a minor role in access to government information resources. Although it is true that the DLP can provide a system of last resort for people without institutional affiliations, or who cannot pay for the information, it implies that the information provided through the DLP will be in the least desirable and cheapest form, and that it will be only information without charge or with a lower user fee. In addition, it does not support the mission of the DLP as envisioned under the legislation that established the program as being one of the major providers of primary government information resources.

What are the primary features that give the DLP an important role to play as first, a foundation for building electronic dissemination systems, and, second, as a primary element in a Federal information dissemination program? Supporters of the DLP argue that:

- The program provides readily established connectivity to local, state, and regional networks carrying government information resources;
- The DLP offers an established infrastructure of service points requiring less investment of public funds to enhance and a channel for institutional funding;
- The DLP librarians are quickly developing their knowledge and use of network services and electronic systems;
- DLP libraries are committing more resources to access to information as well as to acquiring and storing it;
- DLP libraries provide an array of resources in hardcopy formats and in human ability that cannot be matched by individuals using gateway or GILS type services from home or office;
- The DLP has the best potential for developing a comprehensive information and research service for the general public, educators, students, researchers, business people, and people with specialized information needs; and
- The DLP provides service and training to users regardless of social status, knowledge of the technology, or the ability to pay for electronic information, in a politically neutral, community environment.



## **I. Rename the program to recognize changes brought on by the era of electronic information.**

The name "Depository Library Program" is too restrictive and not appropriate in an era of electronic information. Webster's definition of depository reads "a place where something is deposited especially for safekeeping." Citizens soon will have access to information in many formats including active and interactive formats which will never be stored or deposited in a local collection.

"The name "depository libraries" also is not recognizable to most citizens. Unless a citizen has prior knowledge that depository libraries contain collections of Federal information, these libraries are probably the best kept secret around. Even if a major marketing effort were undertaken to improve and increase library use, the name itself would handicap these efforts.

As a suggestion, the name "Federal Information Program" reflects clearly the purpose and content of the program. Individual libraries could then be designated as "Federal Information Centers" for their communities.

## **J. Downsize the program to meet budgetary constraints**

The Depository Library Program has been under almost continuous budgetary pressure in recent years, as the costs of running the program have far exceeded the available resources.<sup>11</sup> The primary response of the Government Printing Office to these pressures has been to make much of the information available in less costly alternative formats, primarily microform. For example, despite the fundamental importance of the bound Congressional Record, it is now distributed in paper only to the regional depositories. Other depositories receive it on microform or pay to obtain it in paper. Many other publications are also only available in microform, while some are available in both paper and microform in the expectation that some libraries will select the less costly alternative.

The rationale for this approach has been that the Government Printing Office can meet its legal obligation to distribute the publications by doing it in a less costly way. On the other hand, for the basic core material heavily used by depository patrons, it is a disservice to the user and to the program itself to distribute the material in ways that make it less accessible and less useful. As more material is distributed in less accessible formats the program is less relevant to meeting the needs of a information users.

Rather than letting the whole program deteriorate, serious thought should be given to maintaining the quality of the program on a smaller scale. Converting selected materials to microform is only a piecemeal solution. The problems of the program are pervasive, and radical approaches may be required for the program to survive. Such radical approaches are necessary because fundamentally, it is not possible to continue to disseminate the same

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<sup>11</sup> See discussion at nt.6, supra.

amount of material to the same or a larger number of libraries with the same or fewer resources without making significant changes--including either downsizing or massive conversion to electronic dissemination.

This fact was demonstrated clearly in the fall of 1992, when the program confronted a crisis in which it became clear that further conversion to microfilm threatens the program itself. Then, in response to a 10 percent budgetary shortfall, the Government Printing Office asked libraries to reduce their selections and specifically targeted a number of "big ticket items" for conversion to microform, including the Serial Set, the Code of Federal Regulations, the U.S. Code, and other basic materials. To many, these are the most fundamental documents about the operation of the government that justify the very existence of the program. In striking a blow here, GPO struck at the heart of the program itself.

It should be clear that if Congress is not going to provide the program with more funds, other fundamental changes will have to take place. GPO can either stop printing and distributing material when they run out of money or they can make proposals to Congress for ways to downsize the program and its costs.

There are several possibilities for downsizing the depository program which would result in the distribution of fewer materials and reducing the cost to GPO. This, in turn, should permit GPO to maintain the quality of the program without further conversions to microform. No proposal for downsizing will be popular. Some library or group of libraries will feel the pain. Painful though it is, some effort to downsize seems necessary if the program is to survive at all. Several possibilities for downsizing are listed below in order of increasing difficulty.

#### **1. Reduce the amount of material selected by each library.**

Either voluntarily, or through the establishment of a ceiling on selections, each library--perhaps even including the regionals--could be asked to reduce the amount of material it acquires. In the past, libraries were encouraged to acquire a large number of items; there was even an expectation that every library would select a minimum of 25% of the available items, whether they needed that material or not. In a time of financial difficulty, such assumptions are no longer valid.

Instead of encouraging each library to select more than they really need, each library should select only those items likely to be needed to serve its constituency. Under this plan, regionals might be permitted to select everything, but need not do so. Selectives would be asked to review the items they select with their primary depository constituencies in mind. Instead of minimum selection targets, ceiling targets--rules of thumb--might be established to help libraries decide what might be appropriate. For example, large research libraries might select 50 to 90 percent, mid-sized libraries might select 20 to 50 percent, and law libraries might select 7 to 15 percent.

To help libraries hone their selections, GPO should also refine its item numbers to allow libraries to be more precise in their selections. It is widely acknowledged that the current



item numbers are quite broad and that many libraries receive more than they really want because they must take a large category of materials to receive the few items really needed.

## **2. Downsize by Eliminating Selective Housing Arrangements.**

A corollary of the need to downsize and the need to ask libraries to select no more than they really need is a need to eliminate entirely selective housing arrangements. Under this program, depositories select materials they don't really need and send them to another library for "housing." These arrangements effectively increase the number of depository libraries and the amount of material distributed under the program. For example, in the years before law libraries became depositories, it was not uncommon for another depository on a university campus to select legal materials not really needed in their collection and send them to the law library. Although this arrangement met a significant need, it has the effect of increasing the costs of the program. In an era of financial stringency, it seems entirely appropriate to insist that only those libraries that have been named as depositories should be able to collect and hold the material they acquire. Elimination of such arrangements would leave the total number of validly designated depository libraries unchanged.

## **3. Downsize by Reducing the number of depository libraries.**

If the foregoing measures do not result in sufficient savings, it may be necessary to confront the difficult political question of finding ways to reduce the total number of depository libraries. Reduction in the number of libraries in the program will be the most painful solution, but may have to be done in order to keep the program from sinking of its own weight. With over 1400 depository libraries throughout the nation, there are an average of 28 in each state. Realistically, it may be that that number would have to be reduced to 24 or 25, or even fewer. In all likelihood, if done carefully, that step could be taken without significant damage to the overall program.

How is it possible to reduce the number of libraries in the program? What libraries would be terminated? This is obviously the most difficult of areas, and an answer probably requires a re-examination of some of the program's premises. Two fundamental aspects of the program are the Congressional designation and the requirement of public access.

### **a. One Congressional designation per district.**

Under the depository library law, each Congressional district is entitled to have two depository libraries. However, over the years, when redistricting has occurred, a district might have ended up with more than two depository libraries and a new district created without any. This situation has resulted in the designation of extra Congressional depositories in individual Congressional districts. In the past, such libraries have been grand-parented in, and have not been required to leave the program. At a time when the program does not have sufficient financial resources to stay afloat, however, Congressional delegates may have to decide which of the libraries they will designate, and eliminate the other(s). The program can no longer afford redundancy in Congressional designations.

b. Federal Libraries.

In many cities, a significant number of Federal libraries are designated as depositories. This number cannot be justified for public access reasons, and many Federal libraries are not open to the public. A review should be conducted of all Federal libraries participating in the depository program. If they are not meeting the purposes of the program, their participation should be terminated.

c. Libraries that do not meet their public access obligation.

Public access to the depository collection is a primary obligation assumed by each depository library. All participating libraries should be reminded of this obligation, and where they fail to meet the obligation they should be terminated from the program.

d. Leave it to the state delegations.

If the foregoing does not result in a sufficient reduction in the number of depository libraries to balance the budget, then each state may have to be given a ceiling--perhaps based on population or area, or some combination of the two<sup>12</sup>--in the number of libraries that can be supported. Each Congressional state delegation could meet to decide which libraries were most important to the program and which they could continue to support.

**4. Downsize by developing high quality electronic information systems that could adequately meet the need for certain information products.**

Even while this downsizing is going on, GPO should move aggressively to develop effective alternative delivery systems that, unlike microform, could meet the needs of users for access to information and eliminate the need for costly paper distribution.

Paper is expensive for libraries to store as well as for the Government Printing Office to print and distribute. If reliable and effective means were developed for the delivery of some information electronically, it would be less necessary for libraries to go to the expense of acquiring and housing the documents. They would, no doubt, continue to select in paper the items they considered central to their mission. However, in many cases, electronic dissemination could substantially replace paper distribution.

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<sup>12</sup> Double the number of Representatives and Senators would result in 1080 depositories, a reduction of over 300. One thousand depositories across the 50 states would still go a long way toward meeting the needs of the people.



#### IV. Process for the Future

This paper has been written by the members of the Depository Library Council to stimulate a discussion about the future of the Depository Library Program. We have tried to state a number of assumptions about the future, and working within those assumptions, tried to develop a number of alternative scenarios for the future of the program. This report contains a great many different ideas, and no one on the Council agrees with everything in the report. However, we do agree that the depository program needs to be re-structured to meet the challenges created by the economy and the development of new technology. We further agree that the ideas presented here deserve to be debated in the hope of coming to a new consensus about a new future for the depository program.

The Council distributed an earlier draft of this paper for discussion at the Federal Depository Conference in April 1993. That draft also served as the basis for extensive discussion of the issues that it treated during the spring meeting of the Depository Library Council on May 17-18, 1993.

After that, Council plans to disseminate it more broadly and solicit comments from many of the stakeholders: the depository community in general, the Government Printing Office, Federal agencies, the Office of Management and Budget, the information industry, and members of Congress, especially those serving on the Joint Committee on Printing, the Subcommittee on Government Information of the House Committee on Government Operations, and the Subcommittee on Government Information and Regulation of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs.

Following that discussion, Council will consider revising the report, adding to it any recommendations that reflect a consensus among the parties. To the extent that implementation requires Congressional action or decisions from the Government Printing Office, it is hoped that those bodies will follow up directly on the recommendations made by the final report.



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